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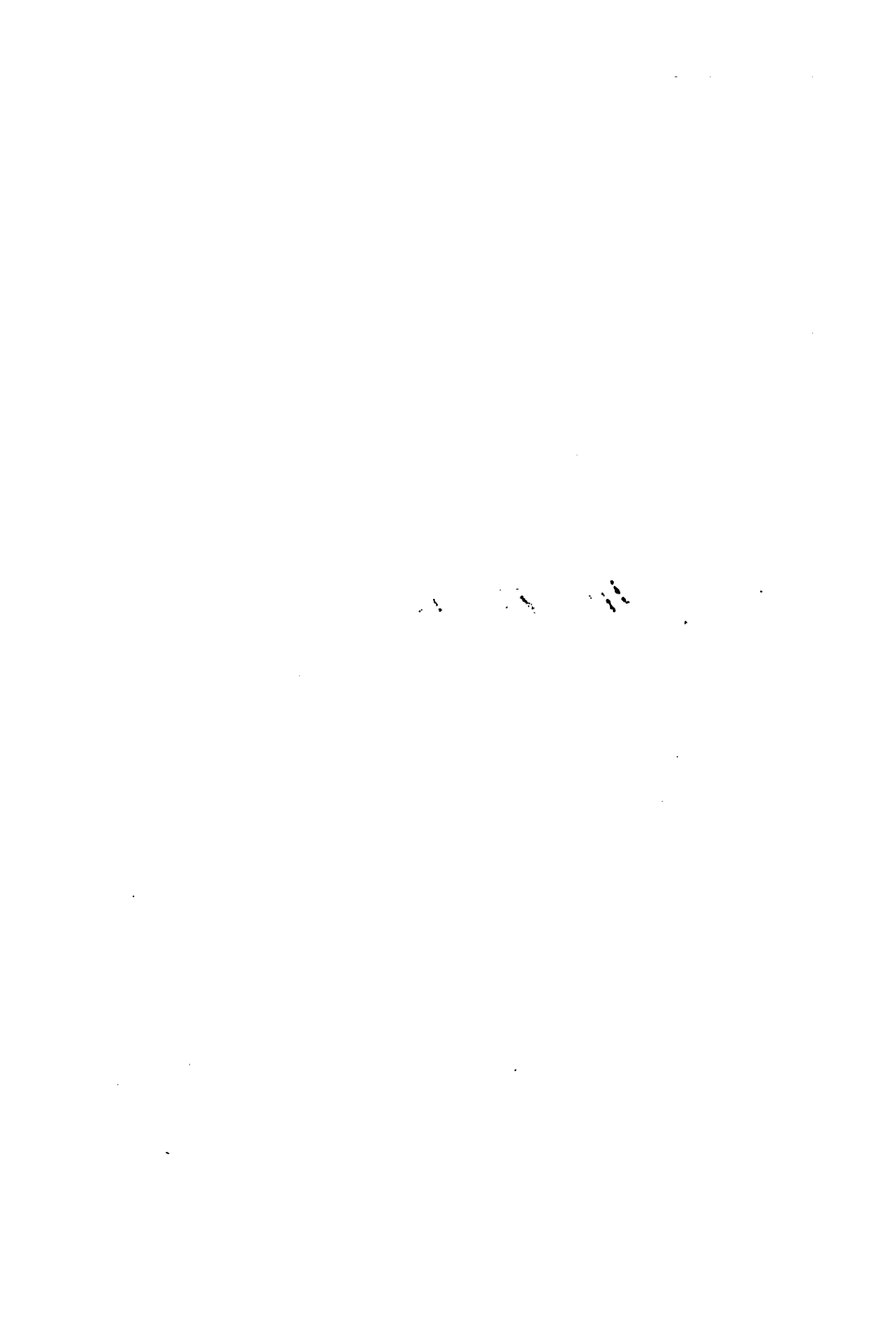
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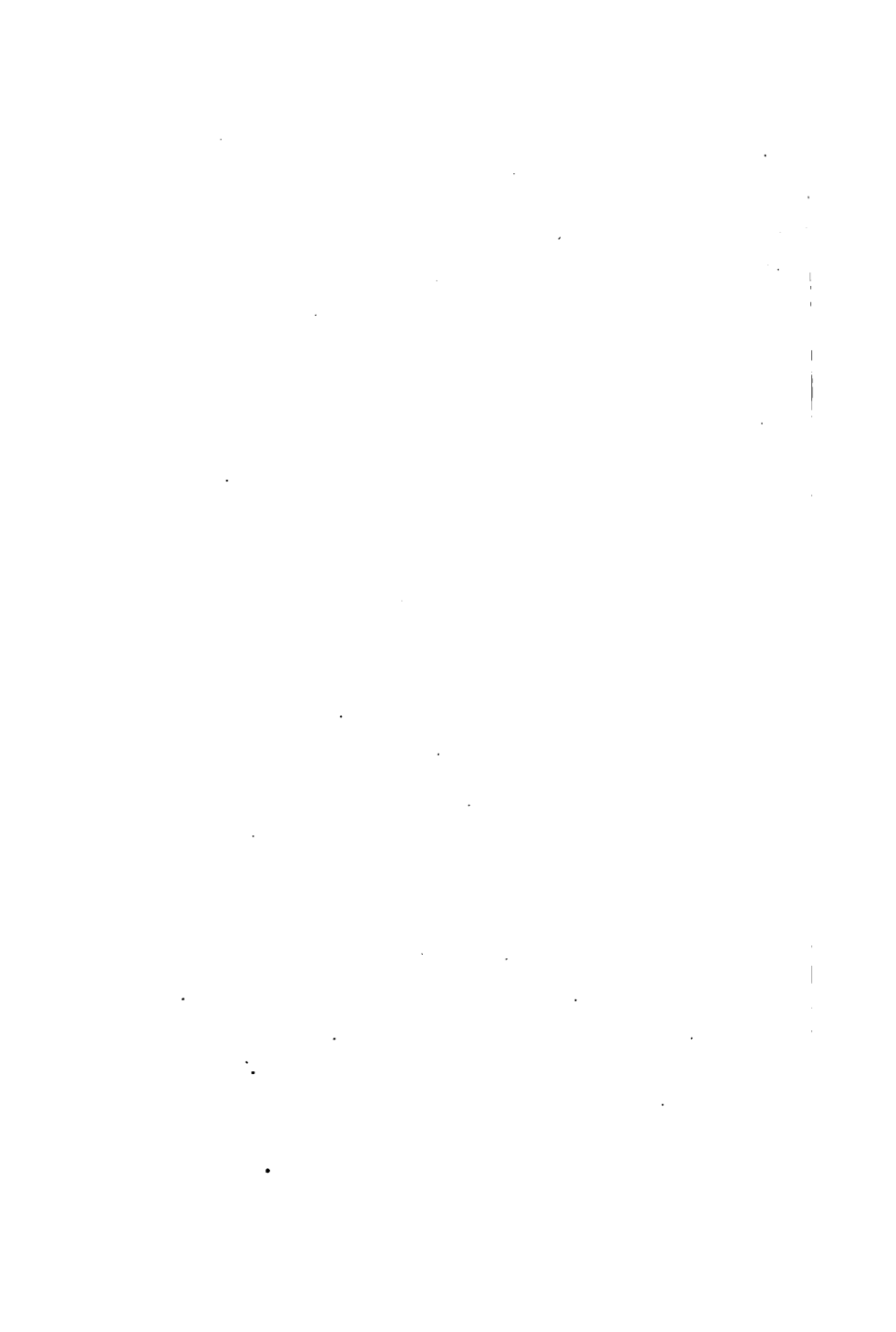
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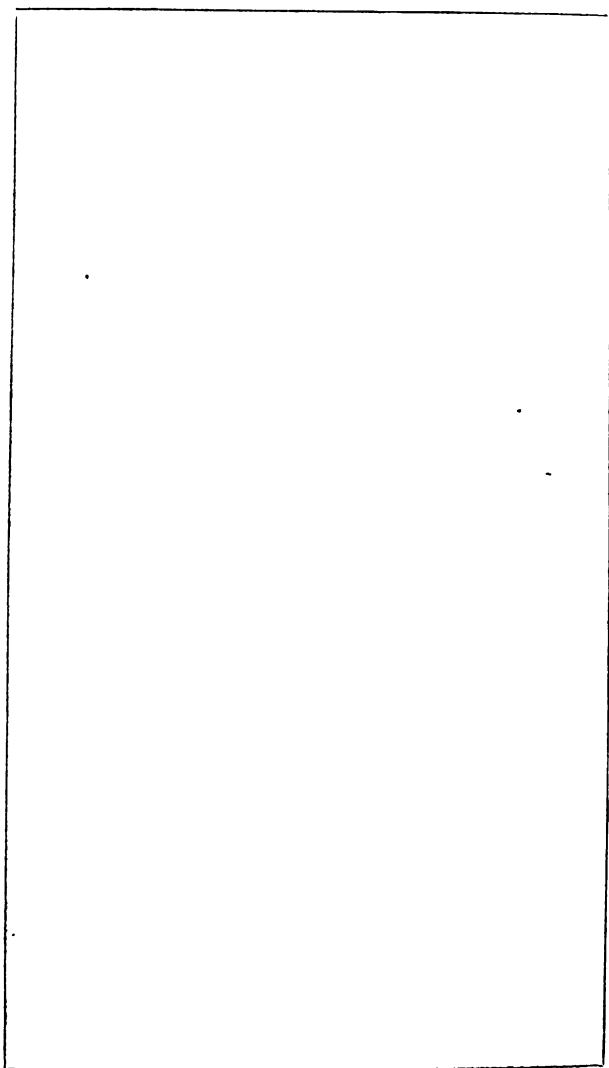
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THE REVELLERS,
THE MIDNIGHT SEA,
AND
THE WANDERER.



THE REVELLERS,

The Midnight Sea, and the Wanderer.

Three Allegories.

BY THE

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THE REVELLERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE WARNING VOICE.

"I say unto all, Watch!"

I THOUGHT I was walking through a valley on a summer's evening; it was surrounded by hills covered with the most verdant and lovely slopes eye ever rested on; woods of every tender colour, and banks of flowers, which fringed a delicious stream in the middle, met my eye at every turn. The trees were cut into glades green and grassy, which were lost in the deep shadows of the overhanging boughs. But I could see nothing beyond. The blue sky was on all sides set in the varied edges of the summer foliage, like a fair picture in a vast frame.

At the end of this valley I saw a stately palace, surrounded with tall pillars and snowy porticoes, on which the full red rays of the declining

sun were falling in all their lustre: flights of steps, the tops of which were lost in wandering flowers and shrubs, here and there met my eye, and far above the stately boughs of the trees rose the upper part of the building. When I first entered this beautiful valley, it was sleeping in the most soft and gentle light which summer's evening could shed on tree, and leaf, and mossy bank, and purple hill. I was so delighted with its beauty, that I lingered continually along the windings of the blue river which wound its way through sandy shores and bushy slopes, while on its glassy surface the boughs of a hundred trees far and near were painted in every hue which the sun of summer could shed upon it.

The air was still, and strange bright birds spread their soft wings along the sky, while others shot with arrowy flight along the verdant branches; insects mused with jewelled wings around heads of flowers which stood in wild succession along the river's bank, as if they were lingering to listen to the music of the stream. Far up the valley the tall snow-white pillars of the palace were reflected in the river's face, and the roses which hung in luxuriant clusters around them, were painted in scarlet stars upon the clear surface.

But as yet in this valley I saw no human being, and I wondered a place so lovely could be for the enjoyment of insects, whose life is but till evening, and the arrowy flight of the glittering birds.

While I was thinking this, an old man, exceed-

ing reverend, with his hair as white as the mountain snow, and the weight of eighty years upon his furrowed brow, with his hand leaning on a staff and his pilgrim's dress drawn loosely round him, came forward from the wood towards the river, and having gazed for a few moments at the wandering water in an attitude of deep meditation, he turned, with a sigh, towards a stone under the shadow of the trees, and sat down, with his head leaning on his staff. I drew towards him. He looked up as I approached, and seemed about to rise, but I motioned to him that he should not, and spoke to him.

"Sir," said I, "can you tell me aught as to this secluded valley and yon fair palace? It surprises me so lovely a spot should remain so secluded."

The old man paused a moment, time enough for me to admire his calm eye and chastened expression.

"Your question is hard to answer at a word; may be, if you will be content to linger here with me a few hours, till yonder sun has gone down, you will judge better as to your question than you would from word of mine."

I thanked him, and told him I was a pilgrim, with but little to hurry me, and would gladly accept his offer; and accordingly sat me down by his side.

The old man said, "In brief, I would tell you that this valley is called the Valley of Life, and yonder fair palace is called the Temple of the World, and

belongs to the Lord of Life, who owns this whole domain. A Revel will be there to-night, for the Lord is away, but he will return before morning to this valley, though at what hour it is uncertain; it may be at midnight, or at the first cry of the early bird, or in the morning; and when he comes, those who live in this valley are expected to meet him, to go back with him to his own country; and this valley will then become a wilderness."

The old man sighed, and fixing his eye on the wandering water, seemed wrapped up in sad thoughts.

"And you?" asked I with some hesitation.

"And I am placed here by the Lord to warn his subjects to be on the watch for his appearing."

"But do they need it," said I with some surprise, "when the time is so short for his arrival, and the reward so high for those who watch?"

"It is even so," answered he; "as your own eye will presently tell you; indeed, this revel to-night runs great risk for all concerned in it."

I was deeply struck with the old man's words, and there was a silence, when, on a sudden, voices struck on my ear, and forth from the wood and under the boughs, which burnt with the evening light, two figures approached the spot where we were standing.

One was of a youth, tall and exceeding beautiful, and on his arm leant a lady, whose graceful form scarce touched the flowers she swept; each was dressed in the purest white, and around the lady's

dark hair a wreath of the whitest roses caught the flashes of the rosy light ; her dress was girt with pearls, and her whole appearance betokened one who was on her way to the revel in the palace ; her brow was haughty in the extreme, and her manner showed pride ; while the youth by her side beamed with light and joyousness ; his eye was full of feeling and recklessness ; his hair hung in curls round his brow, and the slight curl of his lip spoke something of the pride of his companion ; he too was clad in white, and his dress bore the mark of an older age. Two greyhounds leashed leaped lightly by his side as the figures drew towards the stream. They went past the stone on which the old man was sitting ; but as they did so, I saw the youth looked gaily up towards the marble palace, and laughed in his passionate merriment ; his very eye laughed too, and so manly was his bearing I could not but look at him.

“ See, Leila, see, yonder is the palace, and I think I can hear even now the lordly music.”

And at the instant a burst of distant music rolled out from the pillars of marble and was borne on the stream of the wandering wave.

“ Stop, revellers, stay a passing moment,” said the old man, not rising from his stone.

There was that in his voice which seemed to compel the revellers to stand, though the lady did not lift her eyes from the ground, and seemed ill to brook the delay.

“ Young man, and you gay lady, you are young

and glad, and your brow is as clear as your step is free, and your garments fair and white; yet heed the advice of an old man! The music of the revel already begins, which will drown the sound of the Lord's return. Oh, be warned in time, and remember the consequence of not being ready when He appears! The revel will be glad for the night, but the day is at hand. Be warned in time, and watch!"

The youth seemed struck with the old man's words, and his laughing eye looked a moment grave; he seemed to linger.

"We thank you, old man, for your words, they are meant kindly; but we cannot linger, the evening wears away; another time we may be more at leisure to listen than now. Let us on, Roland; the evening wears away." So spoke Leila.

Roland's face was grave but a moment. "Nay, Leila, let us hear what the old man says; there may be something in it."

Leila looked proud and angry, and her lips grew white as the roses in her hair. "It is but the tale we have heard so often of the Lord's return. Art mad, young Roland?"

The youth laughed merrily as he was led away.

"Farewell, old man, we thank you for your words; I will bear them in mind, and speak with you again at a more convenient time."

They passed on; and the old man sighed as he gazed on the stream.

"A more convenient time!" poor reveller! the

day is at hand; and little think you when your Lord will come."

But he had scarcely time to follow up the train of his sad thoughts, when new voices broke out from the wood.

A group of children now approached, merrily talking; they too were crowned with white lilies, and clad in snow-white garments; light sandals kept their feet from the grass, and the gladness of childhood dawned in their eyes. They too were revellers.

"Now, Adah, now do make haste; the music has begun, and you will linger to pluck more lilies."

"Oh, I must; do, do look, Una; shall I not look beautiful at the feast to-night?"

And the little girl wound more lilies round her laughing brow, and sat down on the grass.

"Oh, Adah, how tiresome it is; do come on; the music is sounding high, and the evening sun sinks; do come; I shall not wait."

But Adah still sat laughing, while Una walked on, and the rest around her.

"Una, see there is an old man sitting on yonder stone; how grey his hair is, and how calm he looks; I should like to speak to him," said a boy of the party.

"Oh, now don't, Florizel," said Una; "our time is so short, and we shall be late. Adah there is so

provoking, she will not move, and I do so long to be at the feast."

"Oh, Una's as proud of her lilies," said Camillo, "as if she was the only one crowned to-night. She would not lose a moment's admiration."

"Now, I'm sure it is not so, Camillo, you are always unkind to me," said Una, colouring up.

The children now drew near the stone where we were sitting.

"Whither away, my children?" said the old man, "you are fairly and gaily dressed."

"To the revel, sir," said Florizel stopping, and with his hands behind him, and his white sandalled feet on the grass, looking thoughtfully at the old man.

"Florizel, do come on," said Una, "we shall never be there;" and she held up her hand to hide the blaze of sunlight from her eyes as she gazed towards the marble palace.

Camillo laughed.

"My children," said the old man, "will you take an old man's warning?"

"Now for it, Una," said Una.

"Oh dear, hark to the music," cried Camillo.

"I should like to hear it, sir," said Florizel.

"I am placed here to tell you that the Lord will be here by the morning light, and if you are not ready to meet him, you will meet a woeful punishment."

"How shall I know when he comes?" said the child still standing thoughtfully.

"By watching for his footfall on the hills."

"But the music will drown the sound."

"Doubtless," said the old man; "but, my fair child, it is of that I would warn you."

"Well, good-bye," said Una angrily, "I shall go alone."

"Oh, Florizel isn't coming to the revel to-night, he has got something better to do," cried Camillo, scoffingly.

"Yes, I am coming," said Florizel, "in a moment;" but still he stood looking at the old man.

"What's it all about?" cried the merry voice of Adah coming up; "what's it all about?"

"Why, Florizel isn't going to the revel,—that's what it is," said Camillo.

"Not going to the revel?" said Adah.

"My little girl," said the old man, addressing the lovely little one; "I was but warning Florizel of the Lord's coming."

Little Adah's laughing face grew suddenly pale, and she drew close to Florizel, and having her arm on his shoulder, gazed at the old man, while the boy still stood with his hands behind him.

"Only watch," said the old man.

"What are we to watch for, Florizel," asked the little girl simply looking up in his face.

"For the coming of the Lord," said he, not taking his eyes off the old man.

Adah looked perplexed.

Una's figure was moving away, and her voice still complainingly called the rest.

Florizel moved thoughtfully, thanking the old man respectfully, and bending his head, which was covered with his golden hair.

Adah too turned away from the stone, and forgot all among the banks of lilies.

The sound of their voices had gradually died away, when two youths came down a glade towards the stone. They were intent in deep conversation, and were plainly dressed for the feast. They too were revellers.

The one was graver than the other, and a slight sadness hung on his brow. I was more attracted by his appearance. He walked slowly, and leant on the other's shoulder.

The other was lighter of face and form, and was earnestly persuading him he walked with.

They came to the river's edge.

"Whither away, my children?" said the old man, calmly fixing his grey eye upon them, while I noticed he seemed specially attracted towards him who was the elder and sadder of the two.

"To the revel, father," answered the younger one; "and the music swells already: we may not stay." And he looked on his companion as if he dreaded the influence of the old man's words upon him to make him linger.

"One moment, I have a short message to give," said he.

"Oh, linger not, Theophilus," said the younger one.

"I would hear his message," said Theophilus.

"Go on, Hubert; go to the revel; I am in no humour for it to-night, I would stay and hear the message. May be I will follow. And now, grave sir, your message."

"My son, it is shortly told, though yon young travellers would not listen to it. It is, that my Lord will be here ere morning break, and all who are not ready for him and expecting him will have a fearful doom."

Theophilus stood silently, and Hubert strolled on alone.

"But how shall I know when he is near?" said Theophilus; "for I would be ready."

"Thou must enter but charily into the revel; else," said the old man, "its music will drown your ears."

"The signs, sir?" said Theophilus again.

"Are sounds on the hills, or footfalls on the mountains," said the old man.

"And about what time may I expect him?" continued Theophilus.

"It may be midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning."

Theophilus bowed, and thanked the old man for his words, and remained standing silently.

"I would be ready when he comes," said he; and turned away after Hubert.

"May all blessing go with thee, my son," said the old man, looking upon him.

"Well, Theophilus, and what had he to say?" asked Hubert.

"Nay, Hubert, you only ask to scoff; it is needless to ask."

"Nay, nay, Theophilus, say not so," said Hubert, "you speak harshly."

"He bid me be ready for the Lord, who may come any time this night."

"I would be ready too," said Hubert; "but I cannot forego the revel. What will be the signs?"

"Very faint and uncertain it seems," said Theophilus, looking up anxiously towards the hills.

"Well, but enough to leave off in time, I doubt not," said the other. "I shall certainly join the revel while I can, though I fully intend to be ready as well as you."

"I am in doubt," said Theophilus; "I doubt, Hubert, the noise of the music, the flare of the lights, the merriment of the gay, will hinder my hearing the Lord's approach."

"Well, well, Theophilus, do as you will; but is it likely the Lord should have placed the Palace in the valley if we were not to enjoy it?"

The two moved on towards the Palace.

I waited some little while by the old man's side before any one approached again, while his eyes were following the retiring figures of the youths.

As their white folds disappeared behind the last point of the road, he sighed. "Yon fair youth," said he, "may be ready for his Lord despite the din around him. It is strange to think how it will fare with many."

He had scarce ended, when a new band of revelers swept round the river's beach, and talking highly as they approached us, lingered on their track.

"Ha!" shouted one, a man who had passed the middle age of life, of manly form and sarcastic expression. "Believe me, that is pure nonsense. It is a tale to make women pale. This valley will be a hundred years hence what it is to-night. Come on, Urban, your doubts are madness."

"Well," said he whom he addressed, "I cannot go on, I am in doubt about every step I take, and I feel that the Lord may arrive any moment." And the reveller put his hand to his head with a look of bitter anxiety, and pressed it to his brow. His companions tried to drag him on, but he refused still.

"Oh, if he will think of loitering, and care for nothing but the coming of the Lord, let him stay and wait for him," said the first speaker.

"Urban always is hesitating and doubtful. It is from no pleasure at seeing the Lord," said the other; "for he just now said he did not care for it, he felt nothing but fear at his approach."

"How strange he is," answered the last speaker, whom we will call Antoine.

"Very,—mad, I verily believe," said the older traveller; "but I cannot wait for him any longer; we shall be late for the revel." And Dromio moved quickly on towards the Palace, and his various companions with him, except Antoine; and he lingered to persuade Urban. But I saw the youth stood gazing in doubt on the passing stream, and would come no further. His hand was pressed on his brow, and his whole look was agonized and perplexed.

"Urban, do come on," said Antoine.

"How can I? you know at every step I may meet him whose appearance I fear."

"But it can do you no good to stand here. At least come on to where yon old man is sitting on the stone; he may tell us something which may help you."

Urban let Antoine lead him on to the old man, who sat watching the approach of the youthful revellers.

"Sir," said Antoine, "would that you could persuade my companion to pass on to the revel. The time is short, and the night waxes late; he has scruples; may be you can remove them."

"Fair youth," said the old man, "what are the difficulties which press upon your mind?"

"I feel, sir," said the youth looking down, "that I should not be passing on to yon palace with the rest, but watch for the Lord's coming; but I have

no desire to see him come,—in fact, would rather shun it; but still I dare not. Indeed, sir, if you will kindly help me, you will aid my sad and doubting condition.”

Urban looked perplexed and anxious, and keeping his hand on his lip, still gazed on the passing stream.

Antoine impatiently walked on towards the revel.

CHAPTER II.

THE REVEL.

"Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants."—S. Luke xii. 37, 38.

THE music rolled high through the stately hall of the marble palace; and the hot, faint air was laden with odours, which rose from a thousand flowers, while on swept the stately bands of revellers up flights of marble steps into the pillared hall.

There they all were whom I had seen before. Leila's haughty brow and curled lip, and stately step swept along the long aisles formed by the pillars. I saw her pass. The light of a hundred lamps of silver beamed on her brow; she seemed full of happiness and gaiety; still she preserved that haughty look which scorned the passing groups of revellers alike with the old man's warning.

And Roland was there, not dancing, but I saw him leaning against a pillar, his laughing eyes full of light and joy, and his golden curls shaking with

his joyousness. He was talking with a group of youths around him, who each seemed pleased to have a word from the youth who thought so well of himself.

Una danced with Florizel.

"Now come on quick, quick, Florizel," said the little girl, gaily, "I long to be up with yonder group. My feet go with the music tune—I hate to be behind. Oh, isn't it a glorious sight?" And her lilies danced against her childish face, and she swept her youthful companion along the floor.

Hubert, too, was there; I saw him pass along with the joyous band; the light of a hundred lamps beamed on their youthful faces, and their still fresh flowers.

The perfumed air was laden with scents, and the tall pillars of the stately hall seemed like an avenue of marble, which led out down flights of steps to hills which slept in purple night at the other end.

I noticed there were two or three figures, which lingered outside the building. They were walking down different paths of the garden.

One was standing alone by a lake on whose clear surface the stars were reflected; his finger was on his lip, and his face anxious; he was not looking towards the hills.

"What are you doing, Urban?" cried the voice of Antoine, who, clad in his bright dress, had rushed out of the hall to see where his companion was, "Why cannot you join the dance like the

rest? there is no use in standing here, anyhow; the Lord will not appear from the water."

Urban gave no answer.

"Antoine," said the other, "I can't come, I hate the revellers."

"Oh, I thought," said the other, "it was that you were looking for the King."

"Well, did I say I was not?" answered he, anxiously.

"No, but I thought that was the reason you were staying here."

"I wish it were," said Urban, with a sigh.

"Well, you're beyond me," said Antoine, turning round his richly plumed cap in his hand, from which the lilies were dropping one by one.

"I suppose you mean you hate revelling, for fear of not hearing the Lord's step."

"I never said so," said he.

"But you must have some pleasure in return for your giving up the gaiety; either be a watcher or a reveller."

"I have no pleasure," said Urban, bitterly, groaning and pressing his finger on his lip.

"Well, I must go," said Antoine; "farewell."

Urban made no answer, and Antoine's white and gaily dressed figure swept swiftly over the green sward towards the pillared hall.

Against a pillar outside, I saw Theophilus leaning and gazing towards the hills; he was intently looking at something; and, by degrees, he left his reclining posture, and stood upright.

"What are you looking at?" said a gentle voice near him. "I'm tired of dancing; I think I'll stand by you, Theophilus. Do tell me what you are looking at so."

"I hear something, Adah," said he.

"Hear something? hear what?—there's noise enough with the music, surely."

"Nay, but something above that."

"You frighten me, Theophilus," said the little timid girl, as with her garlands half faded, and her long curls all dishevelled with the white lilies hanging to them, she drew close to him.

"Hark!" said Theophilus.

Adah listened; and there was a sound—a very distant faint sound over the far hills where the twilight still fluttered.

"What is it?" said Adah, looking up in his face.

"It is like chariot wheels," said Theophilus, very thoughtfully.

"Will the King come in a chariot?" asked Adah, turning very pale.

"I have heard so," said the boy; "but the sound dies away and returns again, like a wave of the sea."

And he still kept his eye fixed on the twilight, so that he imagined the very light grew stronger.

The sound of the music, the shouts of the revellers, the pillared halls, the hot scented air, had passed away like a dream, and he was lost to all but the sound on the hills.

"What shall we do?" said Adah.

"I think we will seek the old man at the head of the valley; he will tell us best," said Theophilus.

"Yes, yes, let us go," said the lovely little girl, clinging to Theophilus' arm. And they two passed swiftly down the garden path.

"Whither away so fast?" said Hubert's voice, calling after them from behind, and following his word with an action, he darted after them.

Theophilus stopped a moment. "Hubert, there is a sound in the mountains; the King is at hand."

If a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet, Hubert could not have been more startled. He turned deadly pale, and seemed riveted to the ground. Another moment, and he darted back to the revellers. The music was swelling at its highest pitch; the dancers were swiftly passing down the stately hall; the young and beautiful were glowing with the radiant lamps, and the scent of fading flowers hung heavily on the air.

Hubert rushed in, pale, and trembling, and breathless; he raised his voice to its highest pitch. "There is a sound on the hills, the King is at hand."

It is impossible for words to tell the effect of the boy's words. There was a thrill of sudden terror passed through the whole band of revellers; in an instant each eye was turned on Hubert, who, shuddering with fear, with his face turned to the open air, gazed on the twilight mountains.

The music, in a moment, was still; the dance

stopped as if by magic ; the gay and laughing faces were filled with feelings of terror.

The garlands of half-fading flowers were flung on the ground, and trodden under foot, as the trembling crowd pressed round Hubert, to hear his awful tidings.

"I said he was coming ; I said we should never have come. I said so," cried Florizel in agony, as he threw his arms round Una, who clung in an agony of terror to his skirt.

"Oh dear, dear Florizel, where shall we fly? I am so frightened ;—away, away, with these vile flowers ; I hate them all." And little Una tore her lilies from her brow, and crushed them under foot.

"It was all your fault, Camillo," said Florizel to the boy, who stood like one bewildered, gazing in the distance.

"Well, well, Florizel, it's of no use saying so now ; I certainly thought ——"

"You thought what?" said Una.

"Only that the King would not come till morning."

"Well, but the old man said he might come any time."

"Well, well, don't lay the blame on me," said Camillo. "Let us down to the old man, and find out what we can do to make amends."

"Oh no, no! I wouldn't go out for worlds!" cried Una, "to hear the sound. Oh dear, I wish the music would go on. I wonder where Adah is."

Nothing could exceed the terror of the whole band of revellers : but they received the news in various ways, though it was plain all were terrified.

I noticed Leila ; her face was very pale, and the curl of her proud lip was still there, though her eye was very anxious, as she leant on Roland for support.

"I have done nothing to anger the King," said Leila, with an effort to speak with composure. "He made this place for our enjoyment ; and though we were bid to be at our work when he came, who could tell the moment of his coming ? It is unreasonable he should be angry at our enjoying what he has placed in our way. Why do you not speak, Roland ?" said she, casting her haughty eye up to her companion's face. She plainly gained confidence from the confident tone she assumed.

Roland's sparkling eye was quenched of much of its lustre, and his fresh beaming face looked pale under the lamp, which shed its ray over his head. "Indeed, Leila, I feel anxious ; I would we had listened to the old man's word."

"Well, then, let us go to him," said she, "he yet may give us advice how to act ; it may not be too late even now."

It was strange to see Leila's altered tone, how little charm the sound of the music had for her, and how little she cared for the dance.

All was terror and confusion, the extinguished

lamps lay scattered on the ground, leaving little but the light of the moon to shine on the faces of the revellers.

I could not help noticing Urban, who amid all the confusion alone seemed undismayed; his anxious face looked as anxious as ever; but he seemed as much perplexed as before, and even the near approach of the King did not alter his feeling.

"I do not feel it; I do not really care for it," said he to himself: "would that I did."

Theophilus by this time had reached the old man, who still sat with his staff in his hand at the head of the valley. He looked as calm as ever and leant his hand as usual on his staff. Theophilus threw himself on his knees before him. "Sir," said he, "the Lord is at hand, all is confusion yonder among the revellers; I came down to know what I should do."

"It is even as I said," said the old man. "It is even so; I knew he would come and none expect him. And is it so? and has my Lord come? and shall I at last go home and be released from my painful watching?" And the old man rose from his seat, and turning his almost sightless eyes towards the hills, he leant on his staff, and an expression of such peace and joy passed over his placid brow, as I have seen on the face of one who is near a long-expected and happy release.

"But tell me, pray tell me, sir, what I shall do," said Theophilus, very earnestly.

"Oh, do, do," cried the frightened little one, who stood clinging to him, "do, do tell us what to do."

"Is all ready? are your garments stained with the revel? Go back to the palace; stand at the door, and be ready to open it when your Lord knocks. Blessed, for ever blessed will he be who is found watching."

Theophilus waited no longer, but returned quickly to the scene of the late revel.

What was the surprise of Theophilus on his return to find the whole changed, the terrified revellers were all returning to their places in the vast and beautiful palace: the lamps were again blazing in the lofty roof, and the flowers were being again hung around the marble pillars. The look of terror and dismay which had filled every face was flown, and each was beginning to assume his accustomed expression.

"Why is this change?" said Theophilus to Hubert.

"Why?" said Hubert, somewhat hesitatingly, "why, because the sound on the hills has all turned out to be a false alarm; and the King is, after all, not at hand at all."

"How know you that?" continued the first speaker, anxiously looking towards the mountains.

"Because," said the other, "the sound has ceased, and messengers have come in from the country, saying, that such sounds have been fre-

quent; and are easy to be accounted for by certain falls of rock amid the caverns of the hills."

This did not satisfy Theophilus, he still looked anxious.

"There goes Una in the dance again," cried Adah, letting go the arm of Theophilus; "I will go and join her; do not look so grave, Theophilus, there is no need for fear now; good bye, I will return in a moment."

"Stay, stay, light one," said he, taking her arm, "remember the old man's word, to be ready at the door."

"Well, well; and so I will," said she. "It is clear the King is not near yet, and I shall be back in time. Oh, see how Una threads the merry dance;" and Adah burst from him.

"Well, what think you?" said Hubert.

"That the Lord is at hand," said the other, "and that the alarm was right."

"But the alarm is false," said the other; "it is found so, it is easily accounted for."

"I see nothing in that," said Theophilus; "the King may choose things easily accounted for as the heralds of his coming."

"But it seems hard," said the other, "that we may not enjoy the time while we may."

"Hubert, you know we must be watching, and ready with our lamps trimmed and our garments unspotted, and our staves in our hands when the Lord comes; and who of all yon mad revellers, think you, can be like that in a moment, if he appears?"

Hubert was thoughtful ; " You are right, Theophilus, but what shall we do ? "

" I shall wait near the door," said he, " so as the sound of the mirth within may not drown the sound of my Lord's approach."

" And I will take my stand by you," said Hubert : " you are right, my kind friend ; oh, can we not warn those within of their danger ? At least Adah will be persuaded to keep watch with us ; I will go and ask her."

Hubert darted in through the marble pillars after Adah, whose childlike figure was threading gladly and merrily the mazes of the dance.

Theophilus, taking up his staff, and adjusting his garment around him, with his lamp burning in his hand, moved to the outer door of the palace, which opened out to the hills of the east. On his way he found Urban, who was still standing where he had been ; his face was perplexed, and he was closely examining his little lamp which he held in his hand, the faint pure flame of which burnt clearly : his staff lay against a tree by his side.

" Urban," cried Theophilus, " I am going to take my place by the door to watch, for I reckon the sounds but now were signs of our Lord's approach."

" Are you ? " said the other with a sigh.

" Come with me," said Theophilus.

" I dare not," answered Urban, " without my lamp being trimmed."

"It is both trimmed and burning," said the other, "what would you wish more?"

"I do not see it," said Urban, looking at his lamp, "my garment is stained, my staff is gone."

"It is behind you," said the other; "good would it be for many of yon revellers, if they were as prepared for the Lord's approach as you."

"Oh, Theophilus," said the poor youth, placing his hand on the other's arm, and looking up in his face with a look of keen sorrow and anguish, "I am not ready, I have tried to be ready this long time, you don't know how bitterly, but after all it is impossible."

He said it with an expression of deep determined sorrow, and looked up so piteously in the other's face, that Theophilus knew not what to answer. It was time for him to go, and with a sad heart he left Urban standing where he was.

The hours of the night were at their deepest, at the end of the long pillared hall along which the revellers still continued their dance, one figure might be seen; it was of a youth standing within the door, his little lamp, which was burning, shone clearly on the part of the room where he was, and which the other lamps did not eclipse. On the door itself was cast the shadow of Theophilus, which stood out in keen outline against the light. His face was somewhat turned towards the door, and was bent in the posture of one who listens for a sound outside. His white garment shone in the lamplight and his staff was in his hand.

There was no one near him ; Theophilus stood alone.

"Look, look, Adah," said Camillo, laying hold of the little girl's hand, "do look at that Theophilus, did you ever see any one look so like a fool, watching while we are dancing?"

"Hush!" said Florizel, "don't talk so, may be he's safer than we are." And the group of children drew towards a pillar not far from the watcher.

Adah was silent.

Una laughed, and looked up in Camillo's face.

"If he's right," said Adah, "why shouldn't we go and watch by him, Florizel?"

"I think I will," said the boy, timidly.

"If you will, I will too," said Adah, taking hold of her brother's arm.

Camillo burst into a loud laugh.

"Why, Florizel, are you gone mad? what are you afraid of?"

"Of the Lord's coming suddenly," said the boy, trimming his little lamp, which had hung by his side; "come, Adah."

"Oh, Adah, Adah," cried the voice of Hubert, "I have been looking for you everywhere: Theophilus wants you by yonder door."

"Oh, she's going already, and Florizel too, to watch all night with him," said Camillo, still laughing. "Hubert, you're not silly enough to take fright at all these alarms."

"Young man," said a voice from behind, approaching Hubert; "I have been seeking you some while, we need your company at the banquet, for which all are summoned. The lady will not go unless you attend us. Leila likes you, Hubert, for your gay and gallant bearing," said Roland, smiling, and giving Hubert a look which it would have been hard for any youth like him to withstand.

"I was going another way," said Hubert with great embarrassment.

"Oh, Hubert was going to spend the night with yonder Theophilus, at the door," said Camillo with the same provoking sneer he had put on before.

Roland took no notice of the boy's remark, but again pressed Hubert.

"I fear I cannot come with you: at least let me go, and I will return to you presently."

"Why?" said Roland still holding him, "indeed you must come, Leila waits, and you know she seldom cares to wait for any one."

Hubert let himself be drawn away.

"Go, Adah," said he to the little girl, "go to Theophilus, and tell him I will come presently; meantime do you join him, he is expecting you."

The simple Florizel had been perplexed at all that was passing, and seeing Hubert move away, he seemed in doubt what to do himself.

"Oh, come with me, Florizel," said Adah; "come

with me ; indeed I feel sure there is no time to lose."

And the two children set off towards the watching figure at the door.

The banquet was brilliant as the dance had been ; delicious fruits were heaped up in rich profusion, green, and purple, and golden coloured, piled on vases of snow brought from the hills ; wine sparkled in cool goblets of silver fretted with gems ; tall crystal vases held flowers which drooped with the weight of their own blossoms, and seemed to lie on the hot air, filling it in return with perfume.

Lamps of every colour hung around and shed their red and radiant light on the vine clusters which seemed bursting with ripeness and odorous juice.

At the banquet sat Leila, and Hubert on one side of her. The same proud curl was on her lip, though her face was exceeding pale and vied in whiteness with the lilies which crowned her hair. She smiled on Hubert, and Hubert forgot Theophilus.

If the poor youth had looked he might have seen a cold look of triumph which was on Roland's beautiful but heartless face, as he saw his poor victim ensnared.

"The table is not full," said Antoine.

"There are some few who are still persuaded the King will come on a sudden," said Roland frowning, "and are watching. I should have

thought the silly alarm of an hour ago would have put an end to such folly."

"Were you alarmed like the rest, Hubert?" said he.

Hubert coloured up, and said he had been.

"I felt no fear," said Leila proudly; "one was obliged to join the crowd in the confusion, but I felt no fear, I know the talking of his coming is but a dream and an idle tale."

There was something so cold in this assertion, that Hubert started. "How, do you not think he will come?" said he.

"No indeed," said Leila, "I firmly believe not; they say these kinds of alarms have been so many, and all come to nothing."

"But if he were to come—" said Hubert, who could not quite so easily put away the idea of his approach.

"Well," said Leila, "I have nothing to fear; I am but enjoying the things he has left me to enjoy."

"But," answered Hubert, "surely we must have our lamps trimmed and burning, and our staff ready."

"Oh, I have little faith in that being needful; why should it be? How can such trifles affect the King?" And Leila drank of the purple wine, and Hubert drank of it too.

And Roland drank of the wine, and all the revellers were filled with the heating juice of the grape.

The door of the room suddenly burst open, and a number of figures broke in in wild confusion, their faces betokening terror and dismay. "The King, the King!" cried all the voices together, "he is close at hand."

The terror of the servants was so extreme, they could scarcely express its cause. In a moment the whole room was a scene of alarm; wine cups overturned rolled on the ground, delicious fruits lay crushed beneath the feet of the terrified guests, and purple wine tinged the heaps of mountain snow with spots like blood.

Hubert turned pale as death, and caught hold on Leila's dress. He gazed through the open doors, and down the long hall, in the far distance he could see the stately form of Theophilus, standing quietly with his lamp, and his shadow cast on the doorway. There were a few other figures by him, though Hubert could scarcely discern who.

When the terrified servants could recover themselves, they spoke, "The King, the Lord is at hand! he is at the door, and his awful messengers are already upon us."

"Who,—what messengers?" said Roland, trying to assume a calmness he did not feel.

"There, there," cried the men, pointing to the open air, which they saw through the pillars.

"I see nothing," said Roland.

At this moment a bitter scream burst from the

outside, and Una rushed in and seized hold of Hubert, heeding no one in her way.

"Hubert, dear Hubert, save me, oh, save me!"

"I can't save you, Una," said Hubert most bitterly, his voice faltering with terror.

Pale as death, Camillo followed Una, and both clung to Hubert's side.

"Oh, Adah, happy Adah, what would I give had I gone to watch by you!" cried Camillo.

"Hubert, Hubert! save me, oh, save me! see, see!" was her bitter cry, as she buried her face in her dress.

At this moment figures tall and awful appeared in the distance of the long room without. They stepped in from the open air within the pillars; they bore books in one hand, sealed up, and arrows fastened in bows in the other. They were exceeding terrible to look at, and they moved straight forward.

And as they came there was like the crackling of fire before them, though those within saw nought; a light like a flame shone behind them, and all the flowers in the garden through which they passed had withered up; the lilies on the dresses of the guests faded at sight of them; as they advanced there were distinct sounds like chariots driving over mountains. They marched on and never broke their ranks. Their appearance was indeed very terrible, and there was no sound from their feet.

Roland caught up a javelin from the wall, and hurled it at the advancing band. The javelin

rushed through the air and pierced the foremost one; but though it passed through him, it left no wound. But they all still came on. At sight of them the revellers became pale and still, and no sound was heard but of the deep and heavy breathings and choking sighs.

Little Una kept her face hid in Hubert's bosom.

On came the terrible ones, and at length they drew the bows which each carried, and a winged arrow flew from each, which divided the air as it passed. Some quivered in the hall over the heads of the revellers; some shuddered in the purple fruit; and wherever they fell, it seemed as if all which came in contact with them withered and drooped. One arrow struck Roland, and pierced his breast, as he was in the act of laughing at Leila's pale and frightened face; he fell back, without a sigh, to the ground, and heaved his last breath without a word. A cry of terror burst from the affrighted revellers, as each seemed to think his own end was at hand.

Then the swift messengers suddenly stopped, and delivered their message, that "The Lord was at hand," and retired as rapidly as they had come.

For a few moments all the company were as alarmed and frightened as they had been at first, and I thought that now at least they would prepare for the coming of the King. I turned to look at Theophilus. It seemed he had heard the tumult, and was considering of the cause; but he did not move from his post, and little Adah had come nearer to him and kept her eye anxiously on the door

from which they expected their Lord. I was surprised they were so little disturbed at the passage of those terrible ones.

A short time had passed away, and the scene was changed; the revellers had resumed their places, and the music was once more beginning to swell along the pillared hall. Leila was again crowned with lilies, and all seemed to have forgotten Roland's death, and pale form, which lay pierced with the arrow.

Hubert I saw leaning against a pillar, with his face full of deep perplexity; the great terror which had seized it was gone, but he seemed in doubt; he gazed now on the giddy dance which shot past him; then at the door at the far end where Theophilus still watched.

The latter saw him; "Come, Hubert," said he, "watch with me, the time grows short; the morning increases; twice have I heard the cock crow; the lamps have already a faded light from the advancing day; the Lord must be here presently; do watch with me."

"I think I will, Theophilus; I am weary of this gaiety; but is there time for me to do it? I cannot get myself ready in a moment: I am all dishevelled," said Hubert, anxiously.

"Come, Hubert, come," cried Leila's voice, "what stand you gazing at? The dance is merry and gay; do you fear the messengers? they have gone

far away over the hills; the morning lingers; come, Hubert, come."

"I fear the coming of the King," said Hubert, "and he must be at hand, for the cock has crowed twice, and the morning breaks on the mountain."

"Foolish boy," cried the reveller, "hast thou not learnt yet how empty and vain these warnings are? the King is far as ever. But one more merry dance, and then we'll watch."

Hubert lingered.

"Haste, Hubert, haste," said Theophilus earnestly, "and trim your lamp; every moment is precious; the Lord said he would come suddenly and secretly, and he must be near at hand."

"Well, Hubert, I cannot wait," cried Leila, on the other side; "I shall lose the gayest part of all; I have gazed through the open pillars, and see no signs of his approach, and the sky is dark and still, and not a figure remains on the mountain. Come, Hubert, come."

But Hubert still leant against the pillar, and looked anxious as ever.

While this was going on, I noticed that Florizel had crept up to Adah's side, and hiding himself in her shadow, seemed anxious to watch with her.

"Adah, show me how to watch," said the boy anxiously; "I want to watch with you."

"You must trim your lamp, Florizel, and make it burn, if you would be ready."

"I have trimmed my lamp and lit it, too, but it will not burn brightly; there is scarcely a little flame."

"May be some of the wine-drops of the revel have mixed with it."

And Florizel drew from the door to trim and cleanse his lamp.

I looked again, and a larger circle had gathered round the door. Theophilus still stood close to it, and little Adah by his side. Her face was calm and tranquil, and she was looking on the closed door with an earnest gaze.

The eyes of Theophilus were bent on the same point in calm, deep attention: his lamp burnt in his hand, and cast his shadow on the door itself; it was of one waiting and watching in deep attention; he was heedless of what passed in the end of the room of revellers; it seemed indifferent to him. A little further in the shade stood Hubert; he had still hanging round him the dress of the reveller, not the watcher; but his brow looked anxious, and he turned now to Theophilus, now to the parties who were again gathering in to the dance at the far end of the room; gay and merry as if nothing had happened; still there was an unreal, uneasy appearance about them; they were somewhat like sickly phantoms of a dream, and the music which broke out seemed forced and discordant, as if it would not flow easily and sweetly.

Leila's voice called Hubert, but the youth looked anxious, and remained where he was.

Camillo was gone after the merry-makers, and Florizel had followed him a little way, and soon

returned, and, coming up to Adah, spoke in a whisper,

"Adah, I think I shall watch with you; I don't like Camillo."

"Do, do, Florizel," said she, "but, oh, change your garment! your reveller's dress will not do for the Lord to see."

"Well, well, I will go and do so presently."

"And see, see, Florizel, you have no lamp."

"No, I know, and no need; the lights of the revel gleam bright enough."

"Yes, but Florizel," said the little girl, "they will all go out when the Lord is here; the revel lights will burn no longer then."

"They burn bright enough now," said Florizel.

"Do go, Florizel," said the little girl, not taking her eyes off the door; "there is no time to lose."

"Well, I will go," said the gay child, and he darted off among the pillars of the hall.

"Theophilus," said Hubert's voice anxiously.

"What would you with me?" said the quiet watcher.

"I'm frightened," said the hesitating boy.

"At what?" Why, if it be true that the Lord is coming, we of the revel will fare ill."

"There is no doubt of it," said Theophilus.

"Yes, but what shall I do? I cannot, in a moment, change my attire; fifty reasons prevent me; I shall be laughed at. The Lord may not come, and I shall lose much pleasure for nothing; I may go, and he may come while I am gone, and

then what shall I do? Besides, I feel so disconsolate; I do not know how to make up my mind. You are happy, Theophilus; you have long since fixed your place, and have no difficulties; but I have thought of a hundred things short of the end, and now my mind is perplexed, and I know not how to act."

Hubert moved away, and Theophilus did not notice whither he went; he had a work of watching to do, and he would not look away.

Scarce half an hour had passed; the sun's ruddy light was just glowing on hill and valley, and the cock crew; there were four figures at the door, Theophilus and Adah, and Una and Florizel: all were dressed in white, and held their lamps in their hands, which burnt clearly, and shot their shadows on the wall; near them was another figure, who seemed lingering behind a pillar; still he was dressed in the purest white, and held his lamp burning in his hand; he was looking down gazing on his lamp, and an expression of deep anxiety was on his face; he would not advance to the door, and I noticed the marked difference there was between him and Theophilus: while the former, at every sound seemed startled and anxious; the latter looked calm and undisturbed, as of one who has set all in order.

The part of the hall where they were was deeply still, not a sound broke its quiet; while at the far end there was still the shout of the reveller, and the noise of the merry-maker, though fainter and

less boisterous, as some had sunk down in sleep, and were wrapped in deep forgetfulness.

The cock crew again, and there was suddenly a sound without, which made Una turn pale, and Florizel caught hold of Adah's dress. The palace shook to its foundation, and the echo of the noise rolled on among the distant hills; still, in spite of this convulsion, the sleepers never woke, and the revellers did not put down their wine-cups; at other alarms they had at once taken fright, though only for a moment; but this they seemed quite to disregard.

"See, see, Theophilus," cried Una; "see without the door; does the Lord come?"

He opened the door and gazed out, but there was neither object nor sound; the hills lay calm and still in the mist of morning, and the sound without had passed away.

"I am weary of watching," said Florizel. "Methinks I shall go and rest, as none seems to come, though we have waited long."

"Stay, Florizel, stay," cried Theophilus, "you know not when He will come; yon revellers are in wild peril; would I knew where Hubert were. I fear Camillo is gone past hope."

"I am tired too," said Una. "Will it be safe to rest, Theophilus?"

At this moment a low footstep was heard outside: soft and swift, and still. There was a knock at the door, so gentle that scarcely Theophilus heard it; he opened it: and the Lord was come.

All was quiet as He entered. Hubert walked among the pillars: his reveller's dress torn and dishevelled, and his face wan and pale. "I'm going," said he to Theophilus, "I'm going to put on my attire, and to trim my lamp." But it was too late; the Lord had come, and was in the room, though Hubert knew it not.

"I have slept long enough," said Camillo, who had thrown himself down to sleep amid the revellers: "I will be up and getting ready, morning has broke; I must away ere the Lord come. Fools are they who have watched through the night; I have revelled and slept, and yet have awaked in time before He comes."

But Camillo knew not it was too late, for the Lord had come and stood in the hall, though he saw him not.

"Surely here is morning light," said Leila, throwing down her dice and starting up from the couch on which she had sat: "here is morning light, and the Lord has not come; what folly it was in those mad ones to give up all their pleasure for so poor a chance; He will never come. Revive the lamps with fresh oil, for they burn dimly; bring fresh wine and fruit, and close out the morning light, and let us begin again, for we will think it is night still."

But Leila knew not that the night had already passed and the morning come: it was too late; the Lord had come, and he stood in the hall, though she knew it not.

CHAPTER III.

THE EVERLASTING MORNING.

"These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into Life eternal."

I WOKE and slept again. The beautiful valley was beautiful as ever; fair and lovely. The moon shone on it when I saw it. I looked for the palace; there was the place where it stood; but it was a heap of ruins. I saw no one there; I wandered on by the side of the winding river; the tall trees still played quietly with its soft waters, and moths of evening mused in the warm night air. The boughs hung in deep shadows on the ground. I reached the ruins; a wild rose scrambled over a shattered pillar, which stood where the entrance was, and its reflection shone white and soft on the placid water. Buried shafts and broken columns caught my eye everywhere along which the white moonlight slept. I moved on among the mouldering remains. The ruin was quiet as the grave. Insects of night passed me in their noiseless journey amid the long tangled creepers.

I stopped to gaze; there was the hall of the

revellers, there Leila danced and Hubert hesitated. There was the door where Theophilus watched. While I was musing a slight movement startled me, and looking round I saw sitting on a broken stone, the old man I had seen before. He looked older, and his grey hair shone white in the moonshine as he sat resting his hands on his staff. He seemed deep in thought ; I approached him ; the stir of some leaves made him look up. He looked at me.

"The palace is in ruins, sir," said I, bending my head as I spoke.

"In ruins," returned he, "yes, it is indeed," and he again was silent.

"Can you tell me aught of them, sir?" continued I, anxious to learn something of those I had been so interested in.

"Of whom?" said he, fixing his calm grey eye on me.

"The revellers," I answered.

"Oh! of Theophilus, and Florizel. Yes, they have passed away, all gone ; the revel is over ;" and he uttered a sigh ; "I was thinking of them when you came up, but I did not think any one could be as interested in them as I."

There was a pause, which I broke.

"I would hear how it fared with them, if I may."

"Theophilus is gone home, home," said the old man. "Blessed boy ; he was found 'watching,' " and the old man looked towards the hills which slept in the mist of the moon, and a tear, more of

joy than sorrow seemed to work its way down his cheek.

"Then the Lord came?" said I.

"Yes! He came at last. It was a strange scene, and one of terror to those who were not watching; terror past description."

"Can you tell me aught of the different revellers who passed us in the valley yonder?" said I.

"I was outside, in the valley at the time," said he, "and as I gazed towards the palace I heard the cries of one in agony, and through the marble pillars I saw men who bore out a form like Leila's. The faded flowers of the revel still hung in her hair, and her dress when brought to light appeared covered with dark spots, rent and stained.

"Her cries were very pitiful as they took her away, certain terrible ones of a form most awful and countenances severe and stern.

"She begged for another trial; but they gave no heed to her cry. She said, she had not had time, and meant to have left the revel in another hour. But it was all too late; she called on the hills to hide her, but they slept still in their everlasting silence, and heeded her not. She cried to the palace to fall on her head and crumble to dust to form her tomb. But its pillars remained as calm and motionless as they were before.

"It was very piteous to hear her call when there was none to answer, and repent when it was too late. She tore her flowers from her brow and

trod them under foot. I heard her say, 'Oh me! for a single night's revel I am undone past hope!'"

"Where did they take her to?" asked I.

"I did not see, sir," said he; "somewhere among the dark mountains, but my eye could not follow those swift terrible ones. I watched them for some way, and doubt not they left her in the land of darkness and gloom, from whence I have at times heard cries of utter despair borne on the wind into this valley, and from whence, as I have learnt, there is no return."

The old man paused.

"And Camillo," said I, "he who scoffed?"

"Ah," said he, "he scoffed no more. His bitter smile of sarcasm was changed into tears of remorse. They say he hurried along the pillared hall to find the way to where he had left his wedding garment and his lamp; but he could by no means find his way out, though he well knew the hall. Still it was all strange to him, and whichever way he turned the blackest darkness fell on his path, and wild hurrying winds blew out the revel lamp he had caught up to light him; he retraced his steps over and over again; but in vain, there was no way out.

"Those who saw him, say the poor boy continually returned to the place from which he set out, with a face full of despair, for each time he returned, he knew he would be before the Lord; 'Oh, who will find me the way?' cried he, 'who will show

me, only show me the way that I may find my lamp and my wedding garment?"

"There were many passing rapidly to and fro, but no one heeded him; they all had their own work to do, and seemed to care nothing for him; and then he would dart down the long passages again as one mad, but ever returned to where he set out. They say he knew well where he had left his garment and his lamp, if he could only find the way; it was too late. No one heeded his despair. Some told him he should have done it before, and rebuked him for his tardiness.

" 'I knew each path and pillar well of this revel hall, but I can't find my way now,' cried he.

"At length the messengers of vengeance perceived him; his turn had come, and though he strove to escape, they overtook him and bore him to the same dark hills to which they bore Leila."

"It is exceeding terrible, sir," said I.

The old man was again still.

"And of Hubert," said I. "May I know aught of Hubert's end?"

"I could not learn," said he; "there was some mystery about it I could not penetrate."

"And of the rest?" said I.

"Of the rest," said he, his eye brightening with an intense joy as he spoke, "of the rest; oh, would that I could find words to express how glorious their end was! Theophilus, who was found watching, and Adah, and Una, and the others.

"I saw them, sir ; I was standing just below the beautiful palace, down where yonder rose still tangles round that shattered shaft.

"My mind was taken up, and deeply occupied with the wild scene which had just taken place, when my ear caught the most lovely sound of music and singing. I looked up, and as I looked, the morning sun shone full and glorious on the place. The events I have described had taken some hours, and forth from the pillared portico a train set out ; they were most lovely to look at, passing lovely ; so beautiful that my old eyes were dazzled with their lustre in such degree, that I was compelled to look away awhile.

"The first who came out were the bright and blessed messengers, clad in raiment whiter than snow, and having harps in their hands, over whose strings their fingers passed and struck out, oh, such lovely music, as made the tears come down these old and withered cheeks ! The music floated along through the valley, and along the brink of the stream, till the very birds seemed to stop to listen, and were lulled into a trance. I have heard, sir, of beautiful things, but I never saw the like before.

"The train of bright ones was so long I thought there was no end to it, and as they wound along they disappeared amid the trees of the wood, and were lost to sight, save that I fancied, far beyond the trees of the wood, I saw them issue forth again, a long train of white and shining figures amid yonder hills.

"Then came the happy band—the watchers. Theophilus was first; I shall never forget him; he was clad in radiant white; his face was as an angel's is; he was crowned, sir, with gold, and he had a palm branch in his hand; he walked slowly through the pillared hall, and his soul seemed filled with the music and lovely scene.

"He seemed as one from whom all sorrow had for ever passed away; as one who knew not sin any more; he looked quite pure; he seemed as if he was in perfect peace, in peace which passed my understanding. I gazed on him in wonder, and stood gazing till my eye became dim, and I could see him no more. There was such repose in his calm eye, yet such rapture: it seemed as if all earthly things had passed away for ever from him. I could not have spoken to him if I wished it.

"As he moved along there were heavenly voices, which seemed to spring up softly all round from the wandering water, from the golden trees, and from the deep blue sky. 'Blessed is the man whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching.'"

The old man paused.

"Indeed, sir," said I, "you have described a lovely scene. It is wonderful all do not watch, if such is the exceeding reward."

"It is indeed," said he.

"What was the last you saw of him?"

"I fancied I saw the skirt of his garment as he followed the long procession to the land beyond the hills. But my attention was taken up

with the rest. Adah and Una followed him; you remember them?"

"Well—the little girls who lingered by the stream."

"The same," said he. "They came next, hand in hand, looking most child-like and lovely. They, too, were crowned with gold, and bore the palm-branch in their hand; their faces seemed full of light; their expression was that of unsullied purity; their movement was in perfect harmony: it seemed to bear a relation to the sound of the music. They did look so happy, as if they never would weep again; they, also, seemed taken up with scenes far away.

"I longed to follow them, and gaze on what they were thinking of. As they crossed the threshold all behind then took up the words, 'Well done, good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.' As they passed along, their long white dresses swept the ground in beautiful, but majestic folds. When you came up, sir, I was trying to retrace the spot where their footsteps trod.

"Florizel followed them; nothing could exceed his joy; he did look so lovely; like a young lamb in spring; like a pure white rose just opened by a still stream; like a pearl gleaming in a ray of placid moonlight.

"But of all, I saw none like Urban; oh! how his anxious brow had changed! You remember, sir, how anxious he was, and how his brow knit. Well, it was all gone, passed away for ever. That anxious look

was changed for a smile so serene, so placid, so full of perfect peace that I can scarce think of it without weeping. He carried a palm-branch in his hand, and seemed unable to express the joy of his victory. Oh yes, doubt had passed into certainty; anxiety into rest, uncertainty into intense reality; it seemed as if every moment he lived was too much for him. As he crossed the threshold I heard a voice say, 'Go in peace.'

"'Go in peace,' oh, blessed words! What rapture will exceed that which these words will fill us with? I waited till I could see them no more; they all had passed away, and the long lines had entered the distant hills.

"My attention was roused by a sound, I knew not of what, and when I looked again the palace lay in ruins, as you see them now. So altered was the scene, that though I knew it so well, I have found it hard to trace the threshold their blessed feet crossed. It seemed as if it had done its work; and as soon as the last blessed one had passed out, it disappeared, and here I have been ever since. It is hallowed ground to me. Till my time come to go too, I do not wish to leave it. I love to wander among its fragments, and its wild wandering flowers.

"I fancy in the moonlight I still see Theophilus and Adah, and Florizel, though the revel has passed away, and the gay dress of the reveller no longer sweeps through the pillared hall. But there is a far, far deeper feeling which still lingers in its silent ruins, and a voice which seems to say, 'those

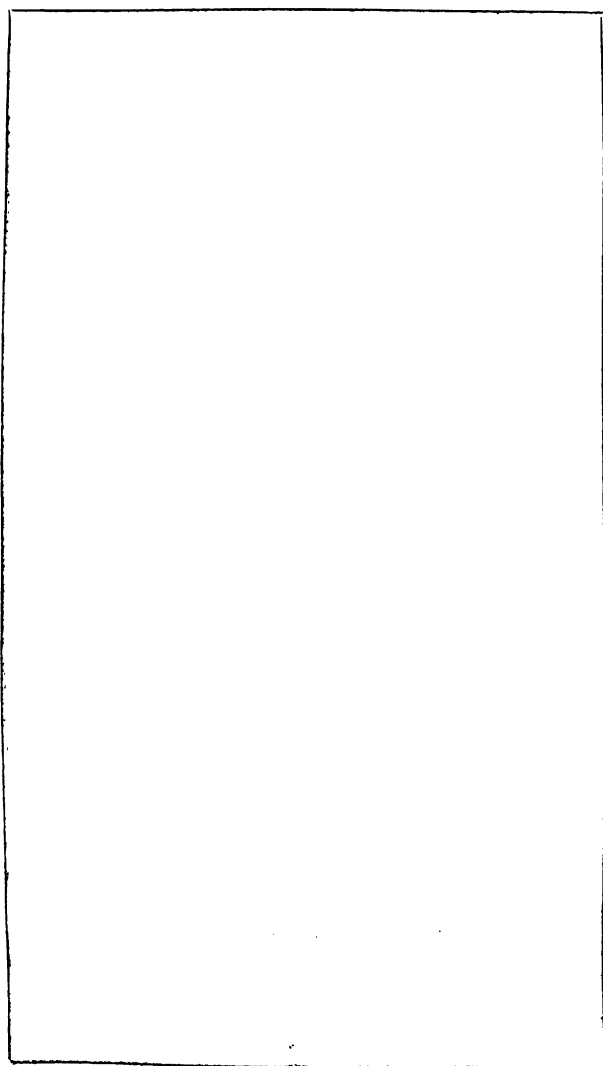
blessed ones watched for their Lord, and being found watching have entered into his joy.'”

The old man paused, he had told his tale, and his heart seemed too full to say more; he leant his head again on his staff; and fearing lest my presence might disturb him I walked away.

I ever and anon looked at him as I went and saw his calm figure in the moonlight. My own heart was full; I longed to be like Theophilus; I determined that I, too, would watch.

It was some time before I again visited the lovely valley. It was one evening late that I retraced my steps. The ruins were still there, though quiet, silent, deserted, and I wandered among them, anxious to find some memorial of the old man. It was long before I did. At length on a broken stone I found these words inscribed:

“I heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee.”



THE MIDNIGHT SEA.

I THOUGHT I stood on a sunny shore, where a thousand pebbles and coloured stones flashed in the rays of the scorching sun. A wide blue sea rolled its waves upon the beach, for ever running up and back again, as if with their smiles and playful manner they would sport with the quiet earth. There were lofty cliffs and banks which stood up close behind me, and above, the blue sky, so hot and clear, that it seemed to touch the very edge of the cliff. There were many children playing on the sunny sands, and beneath the shadows of the banks, and among small beds of seaweed which lay around upon the beach, where tiny fish were sporting in the little pools of brackish water, and sea insects leaped gaily and swiftly from rock to rock. The children were intent on finding coloured shells, and building little houses of sand and digging trenches round them, and some in catching the rapid insects which sprung from place to place; and, as they saw the glittering creatures spring from

rock to rock, they clapped their hands and laughed again for joy. Some stood gazing on the coloured sea and seemed lost in thought; and some idled their time in lying in the cool shadows, with their eyes looking up into the hot sky. I saw several little boats rocking idly on the waves, with their anchors fixed to the sand and their oars in each, as if ready to cross their watery home.

"See," cried one, "see, the sun is beginning to go down, and we are all ashore, and the rocks you know are so dangerous when the dark has come up."

"Oh, never mind, never mind," cried a laughing boy whose clear blue eyes were bluer than the sky, and his merry laugh merrier than the gayest morning. "Never mind, we'll pull by twilight, Vigilo; we'll pull in the still twilight; and will we not pull our tiny boats gaily along the twilight water?"

"Nay, nay, don't talk so," said Vigilo, "you know the rocks are hidden, and there's no pilot who knows the coast who can be had when the sun has gone down and the twilight is up."

But Hilaro would not hear. "See, see here, how gay these lilac shells shine in the twilight, all wet with the ocean's spray: come, come."

"There's time enough to go away from the lovely, lovely island, when the dark's come up," cried another child from a rock of seaweed a little way off, and clasping his hands all the time in ecstasy at the coloured shells, and the lovely is-

land and the burning sky. But Vigilo would go, and I saw the boy stop with his boat, and carefully and swiftly pull it off from shore ; and soon he was gliding out into the calm and quiet sea. I saw his eyes were taken off the broad red setting sun, which he had been watching, and seemed fixed on something beyond the waters, that jutted out from the end of the island. There was an anxious look on his brow, and he called to the boys who were still on the shore.

"Oh, make haste, make haste ; a huge dark cloud is coming up from the west, and I hear the wind roar far away among the distant caverns." But the children could scarce hear the warning voice, for they were intent on their work, and when Hilaro did hear it, he only held up his hand to shake the curls which hung over his laughing face, and cried out—"Never fear, never fear ; we hear no winds nor see any clouds ; the sun shines bright on the crimson shore, and the sky is blue without a cloud. We cannot come, we cannot come, we cannot come ;" and he laughed with joy till the shore rang again. Meantime Vigilo's little boat shot off among the breakers, and I could scarce see more than the boy's tall, slim form, as it stood up guiding his little vessel through the waves and rocks. I turned away in my dream, and as in most dreams it often is, I was wholly taken up with something else, till presently I thought I would again see what the children were doing.

The scene was changed. The sun had sunk and

was gone: a warm, intense glow was left in its place, and the twilight, calm quiet twilight, slept on sea and land. The children's voices were quiet, save where here and there one still cried out in the calm, distant air. Most of them had taken to their little boats, and were pushing them off to sea: some looked frightened and anxious, and some careless and easy.

A figure of One walking amid the rocks came by at the moment. He seemed One whom the children knew, and they all received him in different ways. Some hung down their heads and looked ashamed; some seemed anxious beyond measure for him to come to their side, as if they expected he would help them in their difficulty.

"Kind Sir," said Hilaro, "my vessel is already tangled among the beds of seaweed; oh, help me, help me from it, for the storm blows up among the distant rocks; and I fear the wild and distant sea: I am all alone, and I shall never reach my Island Home."

The boy as he spoke was standing up in his boat, leaning on his oar, and anxiously gazing on the face of the stranger, while his hair, covered with the sea spray, hung wildly over his shoulders. I noticed the stranger did not answer, but looked sadly on the boy's face. "See, kind Sir," repeated Hilaro, "Vigilo's boat, see, is far away; it looks scarce a speck on the sea waves.—You know the way along this difficult shore," continued he. "You can guide my boat."

"If you will consent to let me guide it for you, and leave all the management to me; but the course will be rough, and you must pull hard to get clear of the danger you are in," said the Stranger.

"I will do anything you say," said Hilaro.

The Pilot took his place at the helm, and Hilaro took the oar, and away over weed and rock sped the little boat. Amid the rocks around, other boats were rocking and toiling, and the young crew were striving in vain to get them off.

"Oh, Hilaro!" shouted one, as he struggled in vain against bands of weed in which the rough water had got him entangled, "Oh, Hilaro! What! are you off, and so freely and safely? Oh, I see how it is, you have taken in the Stranger Pilot. See if I would! I'd rather perish first, than give up my own independence and yield my boat to another: I wouldn't acknowledge my own weakness like that," and Pravo ended with a loud laugh, which rang away among whistling winds as the boy, with another violent pull, brought his boat off the rock.

"There, there, I said I could do it, and now would I not rather be myself than you? I've done the work for myself, and you are obliged to call in another."

Meanwhile Hilaro hung his head and pulled silently at his oar.

"What's that you were saying?" cried another, who had been struggling by Pravo's side.

"I was only laughing at Hilaro and his Pilot

there," said Pravo, "for see, I'm beating him fast : and he was such a coward, he would not try to work alone;" and away went the boy, swift as light, standing upright in his vessel.

"Well, I wish I had some help too," said the little boy, "for I don't see much chance of getting off before the storm is up, and I feel the heavy drops now falling."

"You'd better call to the Pilot, too," said Pravo, laughing; "and go as soberly as Hilaro goes."

"I would," said the other, "but for these lovely shells with which my tiny boat is full, and I could not part with these you know, and there's not room for him and them."

"Oh, part with your shells, Imlah," said Hilaro, who overheard the last remark, "part with your shells; it's worth losing anything to feel so safe as I do, and to take the Stranger in;" and he looked quickly up in the Pilot's face and hung his head again, and the Pilot spoke not a word.

"My shells, my shells, blue, lilac, pink, and white; my coral chains from the island shore; my sparkling crystals from the beach too, I cannot part with them." And Imlah gazed on his heap of treasure and sighed as he looked at the storm. Another boat at the moment shot quickly by him, rocking and tossing among the dash of the waves.

"Oh, Imlah, see how swift and free I go. I don't believe in the power of yon Pilot to guide a vessel through the rocks. He's an impostor and

deceiver. Poor Hilaro's duped by taking him in."

Now I noticed, though all these things were said in hearing of the Stranger, he seemed to take no notice of them; but looking sad, yet most kind, he continued to guide Hilaro's little vessel through the storm.

I fancy I see the Stranger now, with his eyes so calmly fixed on each vessel as it passed along; his soul seemed wrapped up in the fate of each young sailor, as they guided their boats through the rocks and seaweed; yet his manner was as of one who thought all was far from right. He guided the helm of Hilaro's boat, and ever and anon cast a look on the wild waste of waters which were stirring up beneath the distant storm. Hilaro sat silently pulling at his oar, and sometimes looking hurriedly up to the face of his Guide.

The wind grew louder and more wild, and heavy rain-drops poured down upon the waves and roughened their polished surface.

"Sir," said Hilaro anxiously, "see how far off Vigilo's boat has gone towards home. He seems to make strange way against the storm: he does not seem to feel the same difficulty that I do, though the same winds and waters are against him."

"Vigilo pulled off his boat while it was yet day, you scarce saved the evening light."

"But then, shall I ever reach my home ere the morning dawn, Sir?" asked Hilaro very sadly.

"It may be, but your toil must be hard, and

without me you would never have reached the shore;" and the Stranger kept his eye fixed on the waste of waters.

"But does Vigilo do without you?" asked the other.

"None ever reach the shore without me," said the Pilot; "he had all his directions from me, and my eye is on him the whole time, or he must be lost: he knows me and I know him, and there is no thought of his which he does not make me understand across the dreary waste."

"Vigilo is very happy," said Hilaro sadly, "very happy,"—and he dwelt on the words as he pulled on,—"very happy to have your love and confidence, kind Sir."

"Those who love me, I love."

A tear dropped down Hilaro's pale cheek. I saw it in the twilight, and he suddenly moved his hand as if to take the Stranger's, but checked the feeling as though it had been irreverent. The Pilot seemed to take no notice.

"Do you think I *shall* reach my home before the morning?"

"It must be by most wearisome toil on your part," answered the kind and gentle voice of him, who as he spoke guided most dexterously the boat off another and another rock.

"What will the boats do which have not you in them?" said Hilaro.

The Stranger sighed.

At that moment a wild and bitter cry went up

to the dark sky and roaring waters, which were dashing the boats up and down. The cry came from Pravo's boat—it had dashed on a rock, as he was rushing madly and recklessly along, and split on the rugged edge.

The boy uttered a piercing scream, as he stood on the rock, with his long hair wet with the spray of the ocean, and his clothes drenched with the billows. His little boat, turned upside down, floated along the water; he in vain tried to catch hold of it as it slipped from his eager grasp. At this moment Hilaro's boat came near the wreck.

"Poor Pravo!" cried Hilaro. "Kind Sir, will you not stop to let me take him in?"

"Each boat may not take more than him who belongs to it," answered the other, still guiding the vessel on.

"Oh, but," cried Hilaro, "at least let us stop and help Pravo to get hold of his boat again."

"It may not be," said the other, seeming scarce to take heed; though I noticed his eye was earnestly fixed on the boy on the rock, and he pulled so close to him, that Pravo could not help seeing him.

"Hilaro, Hilaro," said the boy, "O stay and help me, for old companion's sake." But Hilaro made no reply, but pointed to the Pilot.

"The morning will break long, long, before I can reach the shore," said Pravo, "and what shall I do, what shall I do?"

The Pilot took no notice of Pravo, or of Hilaro's sigh, and the boat passed on.

The storm rose higher and higher; every ray of light was lost, the small stars beamed dimmer and dimmer, the wind howled hollow among the valleys of waters, the waves ran mountains high, and the lights which had shone from the island home only flickered and shot out among the crevices of the mist. The boats in which the boys were sailing or rowing were tossing wildly about, so different were they now from what they were when I first saw them, all gay and light and sunny, on the shore of shells and stones.

On went Hilaro's boat safely by rocks and over waves, when once more Pravo shot past them. He had leaped from the rock to his boat, and was standing upright on it, trying to guide it with a long oar; he was drenched with wet and rain, his long hair, which had glittered so brightly under the sun, all wild upon his neck. His boat was rushing madly on, and was plainly quite out of his power to guide or stop. "Save me, Hilaro, save me," cried he, stretching out his other hand in agony; "do take me into your boat."

"Oh, Pravo, do look at the Pilot, he can help you and guide you safely through it all; he will bring you to the island home. Do not turn to me. I can do nothing for you; my boat will not hold you. There is the Pilot," said he,—turning to the Stranger, who still sat calmly at the helm, calm amidst all the noise and stir of waters,—“ask him.”

"I cannot, I will not," said Pravo. "He will never bring me safely home without giving me too

much trouble and pain. He always does so, you know it; I cannot ask him."

"Oh, Pravo, do ask him," said Hilaro. "He is so kind, so very kind, to those who ask him;"—and he looked at the Pilot as if half in wonder that he did not himself turn to Pravo; but his Eye was intently fixed before him on the waste and foam of waters, and seemed to take no notice of Pravo, save that Hilaro thought ever and anon he did guide his vessel closer to the wreck on which the poor boy was drifting.

But Pravo would not look. The wind rose in greater and wilder fury. The shattered boat rolled fearfully. "Save me! save me!" screamed Pravo, as the boat sank beneath him.

"The Pilot! the Pilot!" cried Hilaro in agony, rushing to the side of the boat, and pointing earnestly to the kind figure.

It was in vain: the wretched boy would not turn to him, or look. His figure sank in the waves. He gave one convulsive catch at the floating wreck, his long hair streamed on the waters, his pale frightened face for a moment stared on Hilaro, as his voice, choking, uttered his death scream, and he sank beneath the billow.

"The Pilot!" cried Hilaro: but the words were spoken to the winds, for the echo returned from the horizon of waters.

It was some moments after, that the boat of Hilaro, as it mounted up the hills of sea, passed close by a white calm form:—it was Pravo, dead. One

pale dead hand was laid on his bosom, and the other washed about with the noisy water as it hung by his helpless side; his head, with its long dark hair, heaved with the heaving billow.

Hilaro trembled as he gazed on the dreadful sight, he looked at it a moment, and pulled on with his oar. "My island home! Shall I ever reach you?" said he to himself.

Imlah heard the bitter cry of Pravo as it came along on the night air. It was so wild and awful, the boy started up from gazing at his coloured shells he had been counting, and looked about on the vast main to see where the sound came from.

"Oh, Hilaro, did you hear the dreadful cry?" cried he. Hilaro did not speak. Imlah pulled at his oar. "Hilaro," said he, "I am frightened at the sight!—are not you?"

"It is exceedingly awful," said Hilaro, looking round at the dreadful waste of water which rolled and tossed around them, and the intense darkness which hung on the sky behind.

"I do not see one ray of light anywhere, save one streak beyond our island home; and how awfully the wind roars! I am so frightened, Hilaro,—are not you?" said the little boy, getting his coloured shells into a heap, and trying to protect them from the drenching rain. "I can scarce hold my helm, and the sails have been long since torn and riven; what shall we do?—How I wish I had set off with Vigilo before the sun sank; he told me to come with him, but I would stay to pick up

these shells : and they are all so pretty,—oh, are they not ?” continued the little boy, going on to himself and forgetting his fear in his delight over his shells.

“ Oh, Imlah ! Imlah !” said Hilaro, “ you will never guide your vessel through the dreadful storm ! Do ask the Pilot to help you ! He will, if you ask Him,—He is most kind !”

“ Will He, indeed ?” cried Imlah. “ Oh, then, I will beg Him to come, for I shall never get safe myself:—see, I have no strength against the storm.”

“ But you must throw out your coloured shells,” said Hilaro ; “ the Pilot cannot enter your boat while they are there. The boat cannot hold Him and them too.”

“ Oh, no, no !” said little Imlah, “ I cannot part with my shells—my dear coloured shells ! I cannot part with them !—no, no, do not ask me ! I will rather try and manage my boat myself than that !” and he drew his shells closer to him.

“ Oh, Imlah,” said the other, “ remember Pravo ; that was what he tried, and could not : no, no, you cannot without the Pilot !”

“ Ha, boys, what are you talking of there ?” cried a voice behind them. “ Here’s a fine storm,—is it not ? Hark at the wind, and see the gallant waves ! who wouldn’t be out in a night like this ? Think of that fool Vigilo, having lost it all.”

At the same moment a boat shot by, rushing up the waves, and breasting the billows. The little

vessel shook and shivered, as if her very timbers would sever; while a youth—tall and slim, his throat bare, and his arms stretched out, with one hand on the rudder and the other on the mast; his hair streaming on the wind, his face drenched with rain and spray, his pale forehead looking whiter against the awful darkness, as it caught the ray of a little lamp he had hung at his mast head—dashed on, safe and secure, and firmly and manfully he kept his hold. It was a fearful sight to see how his vessel rocked and creaked as it swept past Hilaro and the Pilot, and rushed madly up the next wave, till the boy's figure appeared standing mountains high above the two boats, which were labouring at the bottom.

It was the same who had before spoken to Imlah in contempt of the Pilot. His name was Prosper.

"Ha, ha!" cried he to Imlah, "now who'd believe in the stranger Pilot?—why, I'm going swifter and straighter than any of you to the island home. I shall be there before the morning now, and that's more than you will. I would not depend on a Pilot," said he in contempt, "while I have an arm and helm of my own. I've no faith in your pilots:—why, I shall be there before any of you, and do it all myself too;" and it seemed indeed he would, for on he sped, like an arrow from a bow, straight towards the island home.

Hilaro looked at the Pilot; but His eye was fixed on the waste of waters.

"There, there," said Imlah, "see how Prosper does without the Pilot!"

At this moment, a wave caught his vessel, and had almost overturned it. Little Imlah clung to the mast in an agony of terror.

"Hilaro, Hilaro! I will ask the Pilot,—I will ask the Pilot. I can do nothing myself. I will cast out my shells, my beautiful coloured shells;" and a tear started in his eye as he spoke and stooped down to throw out handfuls of his treasure. "There, there they go; dear, pretty shells! blue and white and pink—if they must go, they must!" and he threw them by hundreds into the sea.

"Just this one," said he, taking up one specially beautiful, and holding it out to Hilaro. "Oh, may I not keep this one? it is so beautiful, and I did love it so when I picked it up on the sunny shore. I can hold it in my bosom, it will not be in my way; I should so like to take it with me to the island home." "It may not be," said Hilaro, shaking his head sadly.

A mist sank over the boats, and I could scarcely see them; but when the cloud cleared away a little, I fancied I could discern little Imlah's boat, with the form of the Pilot at its helm, gliding safely over the raging waters. It was so dim I could not see it plainly; but it seemed to me as if the same form was in Hilaro's vessel and in Imlah's, and still guided both equally. Be it what it may, I knew none could guide the vessel safely save the Pilot. Imlah sat quietly in his place pulling his

oar, though I fancied I every now and then saw a tear fall from his eye at the thought of his coloured shells.

But, on went the two boats through the awful storm and through the yeasty sea : meantime Prosper's boat was far out of sight, borne on straight and swift to the island, and Hilaro and Imlah saw him no longer. I tried again to look at Imlah ; and as I looked, the heavy troops of clouds had for a moment broken away from the moon, and left it sailing clear and full in the sky. It shone an instant on the mighty waves as they rolled mountains high ; and I saw, borne on the summit of one of them, a few of Imlah's coloured shells floating on the top ; they shone with lovely light under the moon. Imlah saw them too, and put out his hand eagerly to catch them. In doing so the vessel nearly upset, and had not the arm of the Pilot been that moment outstretched to save him, he would have sunk to rise no more. But His hand replaced him in the boat, and I thought I heard His voice of gentle, yet stern, rebuke. The boy hung his head in shame, and again toiled at his task of rowing, which seemed very hard to him ; even harder than Hilaro's had been to him. I wondered that the child could do it so patiently, when he was plainly one who liked not exertion, and he had been so bitterly grieved for the loss of his shells. But it appeared, the Pilot's kind voice and eye cheered his sinking spirit, and under Him, he forgot his grief and toil.

So he and Hilaro went on together. "I wonder if we shall reach the island before the morning dawn; I almost fear it; and you know, Hilaro, how fearful the end of those is who do not reach it ere day dawn. Would we had never lingered! Vigilo was wise. This has been a fearful night for many of us," continued the little boy, shuddering, "and if it had not been for the Pilot, we should never have had any hope of getting through the storm of waters."

But now my dream took a turn. I thought I stood on the island, by Vigilo's side. It had appeared at the distance but a barren rock; but it was different when I reached it. The part, which faced the ocean, over which the boats were toiling, was a rock; and the spray made its surface shining and polished. On the top of this stood Vigilo. He had reached it before the first streak of morning light had flashed on the far-off haven, where the eastern sky touched the waters. But the light of morning had broken now; the sky in the east was red all over; and the water, such as there was in the extreme distance, was tinged with daylight, as its tiny ripples seemed to woo the rosy sky with joy and peaceful gladness at its soft returning light. Oh, it did look so peacefully beautiful! The light had caught on the wet surface of the rock, and glittered with long slanting rays on it, till it shone like burnished gold; though the face of the island which was towards the boats was dark, and wild, and gloomy. So, too, was the sea and sky on that

side. The waves were still tearing, and foaming, and tossing; and the sky still black, so wild, that I could not see where the water began and the sky ended; it seemed one wild, tossing to and fro, of mist and billows. So different it was to the view from the other side; no words can describe the lovely peace, and light, and beauty of it, though most of it was still very indistinct, for the sun had not yet risen. I thought I was standing by Vigilo. He was looking on the dark waters; his little boat rocked beneath him; it had crossed over safely and securely. The light of morning glowed behind him, and his figure stood up tall and dark against the streaked sky.

At last, on the waste waters, I saw a single small speck appear, coming out of the darkness. Vigilo saw it, and watched it anxiously. It was a boat, and was making rapidly for the island: it came on fast; it had a sail up, and presently we plainly saw the figure of one who held the helm; he stood upright, one hand on the mast, his other on the rudder, his long hair floating on the wind. It was Prosper. Then he had come safely, and without the Pilot. "Not yet," said Vigilo; for I had spoken my thought aloud.

But Prosper came rapidly on; he fast approached the rock. "Ha! ha!" shouted he above the hoarse wind and water. "I said so—here I am—I have braved the wind, and breasted the water, and am safe without the Pilot:—I said I should: oh, who is such a fool to take in another when he can do the

work for himself? Oh, how gallantly my noble boat has breasted the winds and waves; and I was all alone,—yes, all alone, no other arm to help me: none but my own. Oh! who would have another when he can do it for himself?"

"Oh, Prosper, Prosper," cried Vigilo, raising his voice above the noise of the elements, "Stay, stay, speak not so madly; you are not here yet—you are not here yet—and you *cannot* reach it alone."

"Cannot!" cried Prosper, "don't say cannot to me, I can do what I will," and on rushed the boat closer and closer to the island. The boat suddenly reeled and cracked, and the boy stepped for the mast.

"Oh, Prosper! see,—your boat is reeling, see,—it is spitting,—it is sinking,—save him, save him!" shouted Vigilo, as with a violent and splitting force the boat dashed against the rock of the island.

"Ah! I fear nothing," cried the wild boy, as the planks were riven in sunder. "I fear nothing;" and he clasped the polished rock with one hand, and flung the other round its edge. "Help me, Vigilo don't you see I'm sinking?" shouted the boy. It was awful to see him; he had flung his breast against the rock, and he was hanging high above the surge, which one moment dashed against his feet, and the next rolled back, so as to leave an awful vault yawning beneath him. Every member of his body seemed stretched to its last point to save the clinging boy; and his eye, fearless as it

had been, gazed down the dreadful gulph below, with terror—each moment seemed as if it must be his last. The rock was so jagged and slippery, it seemed as if it would give him no longer holding place.

Meantime, the boat, shivered into fifty pieces, floated away in all directions, and nothing was left but air and water between Prosper and the deep. At this moment, in the distance, on the dark waters, I thought two little boats heaved in sigh, like specks upon the wild waters. They were the boats of Hilaro and Imlah, and the Pilot was with them. They had just emerged from the darkness, at the moment when Prosper, hanging, as I have described, once more shouted "Help, Vigilo, help! can't you help a companion in his peril?"

"I can do nothing for you; you know it," said Vigilo, holding his hand on his brow, and gazing with intense anxiety to see how near the Pilot was, and what hope there was of His being there to save Prosper. "I can do nothing, Prosper; nothing, you know it: the Pilot,—the Pilot,—He alone can do all."

"Oh, Vigilo, I am in agony, agony,—I can hold no longer, I shall fall: I shall sink—save me—save me."

"Stretch out your hand to the Pilot, He will save you—He is but on yonder wave; another pull of the oar of Hilaro's boat will bring Him to your side—stretch out your hand."

"No, no," cried the sinking boy, "I cannot

see Him—the waters come between Him and me.”

Vigilo looked with agony to see if He were near. At this time I saw the Pilot close over the point to where Prosper yet clung. I saw His eye fixed on the sinking boy, and His hand stretched out to save; but Prosper would not look; he said he could not see Him, and still cried on Vigilo. His feeble grasp gave way, and with a wild piercing cry, he sank to rise no more. The waters closed over him, and the waves rolled on as they had before. It was very awful.

I looked again: Hilaro and Imlah had reached the shore, and their little boats rode peacefully beneath the rocks; the Pilot's form was near them, and with them—they could do nothing without Him. Hilaro landed first. I saw him step from his boat. There was a difficulty in climbing the rocks, but he seemed borne up with hope; if he had been there sooner, it would have been easier for him. But the Pilot's hand seemed always present to help him in his passage—at last he stood by Vigilo's side.

Little Imlah's ascent had more difficulties. I noticed, as he landed, there were streaks of colour on the waters, which looked like shells floating from the shore, but I did not see his eye follow them; they did not seem any longer to have a charm for him; he leant on the Pilot's arm, and stood with Hilaro by Vigilo's side.

I looked again, and they were walking together;

before them, eastward, lay a lovely land, verdant with many colours and a thousand hues; the morning sun had risen, and glowed in full and beaming lustre on the trees and rocks, and flowers, and calm blue seas, which stretched out beyond the land. The island was far larger than I thought, and very, very lovely.

Behind, lay the dark night and the heaving billows, which still rolled restlessly, and tossed themselves in wearisome fury. I shuddered when I gazed on the outer darkness, and those whose cold faces were still wandering on the wandering water, with their pale brow towards the dark sky. I had a feeling as if they would wander and heave for ever.

I turned and gazed with joy on the peaceful forms of those who had reached their Island Home; the last I saw of them, was as they stood gazing on the glorious morning. Happy, most happy, to have trusted wholly to the Pilot, and Him alone.

THE WANDERER.

ON a hot day in summer I had wandered far from home under the deep shade of a wood; a river ran along singing its eternal song to the music of the birds, and the tiny flowers with their white and yellow eyes seemed to stand in beautiful broken lines along the banks, as if they were listening to the harmony of the full air and water while they gazed up into the lovely sky. Presently, along the river and amid the trees, and the little wandering insects who kept up the bright dance, behold, two lambs appeared walking by the stream, and presently they laid themselves down at my feet to rest, nothing amazed or disturbed at my presence.

"How happy we are by these cool streams and pastures," said one to the other.

"Very," said the other, "but still I do so want to get out to yonder hills we always see in the distance, I do so want to try the pastures far up this river, they must be so rich;" and the little lamb lay gazing with her quiet eye looking up the stream.

"Oh," said the other, "how discontented! why not rest here quietly, where will you ever find so kind a Shepherd and so sweet a pasture?" At this moment I heard a Voice which called through the wood, which I did not doubt was the Shepherd's, for the instant they heard it the little lambs sprang up and ran towards the place it came from, and presently I saw numbers of lambs and sheep running towards the same spot as if they had all heard the Shepherd's voice and followed it. It was beautiful beyond expression to see how each lamb seemed to know and love the Shepherd's Voice. But still more beautiful it was when presently I saw the Shepherd Himself coming along, and all the lambs around Him following most gently and happily, as if they so much loved Him, and the Shepherd looked most wondrous kind with His long crook in His hand, He was carrying on His arm a little lamb, and He was gently leading by a string another sheep; all seemed happy where the Shepherd was; I soon saw among them the two lambs and I noticed that one of them kept gazing up toward the hills.

The evening was coming on and the cool air refreshed the flock, I noticed the Shepherd was leading them towards a quiet fold. I saw His eye was anxiously bent on the discontented lamb. "Little lamb," said the Shepherd to her, "run for yonder lambs which have not heard the call." She left His side, and I thought in having something given her to do she forgot the hills and was more cheer-

ful. The night fell in, and the lambs of the flock slept, and the Shepherd watched over them all night for He never seemed to sleep.

There was a cold dark hill, dreary and desolate, the wind howled piteously over it, and the short withered grass blew about on its weather-beaten top; a lamb and a goat came hurriedly up the hill side and were evidently intent on some work, but looked constantly behind them with fear.

"Haste on, haste on," said the goat, "we shall be on the soft ground presently."

"Oh, my feet are so cut with the stones and my fleece so torn with the briars that I cannot go on; would I had never left the fold and the quiet river!"

On they ran over hill and dale into the dark cold night, which seemed to grow more dreary round them every step they took, till the poor lamb panted for breath and was covered with the blood from her wounds. "Stay, stay," cried she, "I can go no farther, I must lie down here and die,—oh the fold, the beautiful fold—the kind Shepherd." And the poor lamb was so worn out she sank down exhausted.

"Come unto me, all ye that are weary," cried a calm gentle Voice in the far off distance, and came up sweetly on the soft wind more like a word in a bright dream, and at the moment the clouds hurried across the moon, and showed its clear round light sailing through the deep blue of night, and a

beam fell all white and silvery on the little lamb, shining on it while all around was dark and dreary, a wild wilderness, hill and moor covered with thin stunted grass which blew up and down in the wind; the poor little wanderer lay there so drearily with its head leaning on a rough stone, and its dull eye turned to where the Shepherd's Voice was.

Now while the lamb lay with the big tear trickling down its fleecy face, and its eye turned to the fold, the beam still kept shining on the spot where it was, and I saw in the distance every moment more distinctly, the Form of one, coming across the hill towards the lamb, though it was at first very dim, and the same calm Voice seemed to come fleeting along, "Stay, poor wanderer, I will heal thy backslidings, and will carry thee home to the fold on My shoulders rejoicing." The lamb turned its sad eye towards the Shepherd's face.

"Come, come," said the goat running up again to the side of the lamb, "come haste, haste, see how the morning breaks over the hill yonder and the green pastures will rest your tired body, and such pastures as you never saw or dreamt of." But the tired one would not turn its eye, but kept it fixed on the advancing form of the Shepherd. "No, no," it said, "I have strayed far enough, I heard the Shepherd's Voice, and I will go no farther."

And the moonbeam shone out clearer than ever, and the Voice came up with gentle sweetness, like music at midnight when all around is still—"Fear

not, for I am near thee ;" and the lamb looked up so cheered and peacefully ; but the goat went on persuading, and the wanderer began to attend more to what it said, for at that moment the moonbeam became more dim, and the clouds covered it more. Now I was so intent on watching the advance of the Shepherd, and so anxious He should reach the lamb in time before it gave any more heed to the goat, that I for the moment turned away from the straying one ; what was my grief and surprise when I looked again !

The rough stone lay alone, no moonbeam shining, the light spot all dark, and the lamb fled, and far on in the distance I saw the goat and the lamb running on as hard as her weak body would let her over the hills away from the Shepherd and the sweet Voice, into the dull, cold night again. I turned to look for the Shepherd, Who I thought would surely go back to the rest of the flock who remained patiently in the fold, and seek the silly wanderer no more, but what was my surprise and thankfulness, when I saw the Shepherd still coming on in the track of the poor lamb, still following it with His crook on His shoulder, though His form was very dim and He did not speak. " Will He go after it," thought I, " till He find it ?"

But on and on went the heedless, silly lamb, into what the goat had called the morning light, that turned out to be nothing but vivid northern lights, which flashed and flickered in the sky, but the night was deeper than ever.

Now to my surprise I saw the Shepherd overtake the lamb, but He did not speak to it, nor did the lamb seem to be aware of His presence, for His form was wrapped in thick darkness. He passed swiftly by the panting wanderer, and I saw just where the ground was smooth and even, He laid down his staff right in the lamb's path, and withdrew a little space: I wondered what this was for.

"Oh! I am so, so worn. I see yonder is no morning light; it is but the flicker of the north lights. Oh, would I could hear again the Shepherd's Voice, and see the bright moonbeam only once more! I think I never would turn back again."

"Nay!" said her companion, "bear up, it is but a little farther and you will be in the vast pastures, full of purple flowers, where we goats feed; we are kept in no close fold, but range free and wild where we will, over the far hills." "And no Shepherd to be with you at night?" said the lamb with a sigh. "Shepherd to tend us at night! No," said the goat, with scorn, "we are free of shepherds, and folds, and all such restraints; we goats are at full liberty," said he, still looking round. "But suppose the wolves come at night, who have you here to guard you?" answered the lamb, anxiously. "Oh! wolves, no," said the other, "but come on, come on, cheer up, see, here the ground is softer and more smooth, it will rest you."

But at this moment the lamb reached the spot where the Shepherd's staff lay, and on coming up to

it, did not see it in the dark, and fell over it with such force, that it cut itself so severely against the stones on the other side, that the blood flowed copiously, and the poor wanderer lay moaning on the ground. I remarked that the goat did not stumble at the staff, but went clear over it. Now it made me wonder how it was that the Shepherd, who seemed to love the sheep, should thus intentionally hurt it. "Oh! stop, stop, stop, for me," said she. "I am sorewounded and hurt, I cannot run any more; I am undone, undone!" But the goat did not seem to heed its bitter cry, or to care for the lamb. "Oh! I am all alone, all alone in this cold, dark, lonely hill, away from the happy, happy fold and the quiet, peaceful flock, what shall I do, what shall I do? Would I had never left it; all, all alone!" and it seemed to lie down to die.

"Not alone, for I am with thee," said the Shepherd's Voice close by, but very sternly, and with deep sorrow, and I saw the Shepherd draw near and binding up the wound of the lamb, laid its head on the grass and went down to a brook which passed along near them for water to wash it. At the moment the goat returned with others with it, and running up to the lamb, said, "Be quick, be quick, a lion's roar has been heard and he is in full pursuit." "I will never again leave the Shepherd," said she. "Oh do not think he will return," answered the other. The lamb turned its eye to where the form of the Shepherd could be dimly

seen by the bank. "I will tread on the lion," said a voice.

"Did you hear that?" said the lamb, "it was the Shepherd's Voice speaking again from the brook yonder, I heard it."

"No, no," answered the other, "it was but the wind. I have often heard such sounds as that before; they are but echoes, and we've often heard them at night, wandering about on these cold, dreary solitudes. Come along."

I looked to see if the Shepherd were near.

"Well, I must go, I cannot wait," said the goat. "I cannot risk my life anyhow."

"Leave me not alone," said the lamb.

"Thou art not alone," said a sad and gentle Voice, "I am with thee."

At this instant the lion appeared on the brow of the opposite hill, with his huge mane hanging to the ground, and his angry eye gazing over the vast plain, and on seeing the lamb and the goat, he set up so terrible a roar that the wilderness rung again. I looked to see where the Shepherd was at that dreadful moment, and behold, He was still bending over the brook, and seemed undisturbed by the lion's approach.

I turned again and the lamb was gone, and the goat with her, and their forms were flying far away over the wilds in the dim, shadowy moonlight. "Oh! foolish wanderer, doubtful lamb, to misbelieve so kind, so wondrous kind a Shepherd."

The lion having uttered his tremendous roar, and

looking around him as if he defied the powers of the vast wilderness, and feared no one who might be there to oppose him, set off in full pursuit of the lamb and the goat. He did not seem to see the Shepherd.

I wondered what the Shepherd would do ; surely now He will go back to His quiet flock. He has given yon poor lost one every chance, He has tried her long enough.

But no, His love was not spent yet, nay, it seemed more earnest than ever. He still went on, with His staff in His hand, and His eye fixed on the lamb, as if He were fully determined to bring back the mistrustful wanderer.

But on and on flew the lamb before the roar of the terrible beast. The lion did not seem to see the Shepherd, and presently the Shepherd passed him, yet was wrapped in such dim mist that the wild animal did not see Him.

"Stay, wanderer, stay," said the Shepherd ; the lamb seemed to hear it, and slackened his pace, but the lion roared again, and on fled the lamb.

I wondered what the Shepherd would do : and, behold, He passed by the fugitive, and having placed Himself in its path, He speedily dug a pitfall right in the pathway along which it was coming.

The lamb proceeded in its headlong course, and already wounded and faint, stumbled on the edge of the pitfall and fell in, while the goats not coming upon it pursued their way.

The lamb lay trembling violently, and turning her languid eye along the path by which she had come, thought of the kind Shepherd and the peaceful fold. "Oh, my happy, happy fold, oh, kind and patient Shepherd, oh, peaceful flock, I shall never see you again;" and the lion's roar shook the ground again like the thunder, and in a few moments his terrible eye was glaring in on the lamb as she lay bleeding in the pit. It is strange, I thought, the Shepherd should have let the lamb fall into the pit thus.

Now I saw the lion was about to make a spring, when in an instant the beautiful Voice came by, "Fear not, little lamb, for I am with thee." Oh! wondrous kind did the Voice sound, and wondrously did the poor lamb turn her weary eye to see whence the Voice came, when on a sudden the form of the Shepherd, with His long staff, appeared at the side of the pit.

The struggle between the Shepherd and the lion was long and bloody; and all the while the lamb lay, panting in fear and weariness, in the pit, her fleece torn with brambles, and her body covered with blood. At length the lion ran off into the desert, howling and repulsed, and He, the Shepherd, who was already covered with His own blood, bent over the pit where the wanderer lay, and lifting her out, gently laid her on His shoulders, having bound healing leaves around her wounds.

I looked more than once after them, and I saw the Shepherd was gradually and calmly retracing

His steps toward the pasture. The poor lamb was silent and deeply sad, and I noticed, cast her wistful eyes over toward the hills where the pasture lay. Morning light gently came out behind hill and tree, and the sky above became a paler and a paler blue, till the stars were hanging out in it like silver lamps; while far down towards the east, the blue melted into gold where the sun was coming. The gentle morning light shone upon the Shepherd's brow, and cast His shadow behind on the ground of the wilderness.

I thought I saw them almost reach the fold, and the Shepherd seemed to lay down His tired burden on the green grass. He bent with wondrous kindness over it, and bid it lie still till He should return and bring it home. "Meanwhile," said He, "stay here, and let no voice or call lead you hence. You have strayed too far and too wilfully to return yet to the fold; your eyes may see it from where you lie, and the forms of other lambs will, in the distance, remind you of your home, and where you will soon again be. Farewell! little lamb," continued He, leaning once more over it, "farewell! I leave you this to bear on your shoulder till I come again. It will remind you of Me and of My love. Bear it patiently; it will help to keep you where you are, and when I return, if still you are as I left you, I will take it away and bear you to the fold." So saying, He laid His crook like a cross on the lamb's shoulder, and left it there. He turned away alone. "Farewell! little lamb,"

I thought were His last words: "It is My good pleasure to give you the fold;" and I saw Him no more. Nothing was left save the lamb lying quietly, with the cross resting on her shoulder, and her sad and loving eye fixed silently on the point where last she saw the Shepherd's form.



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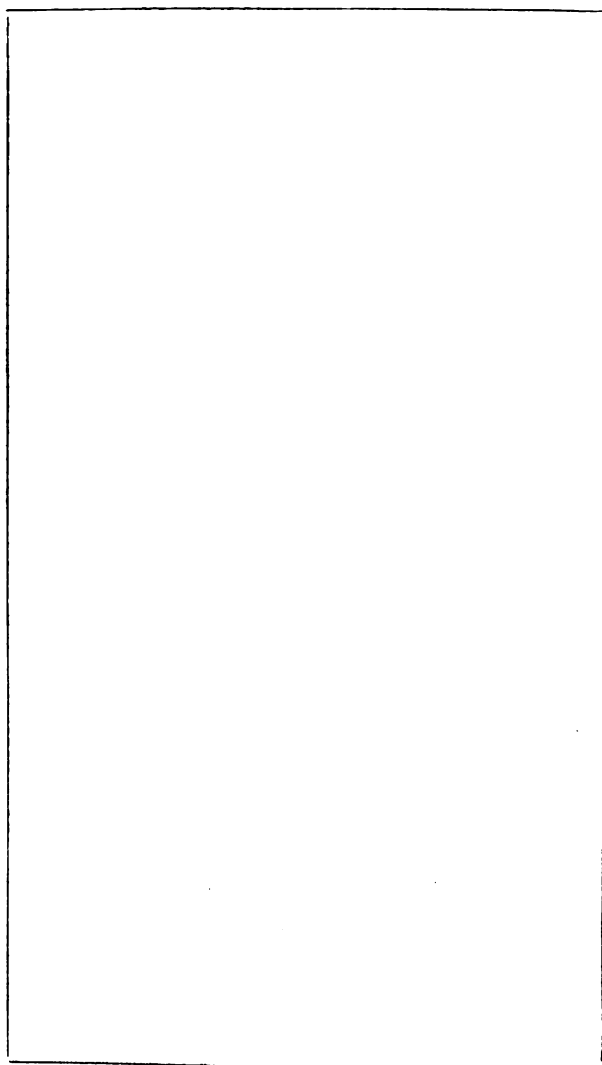
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